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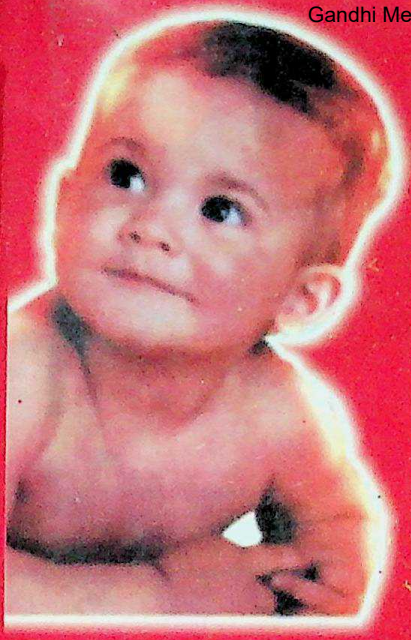

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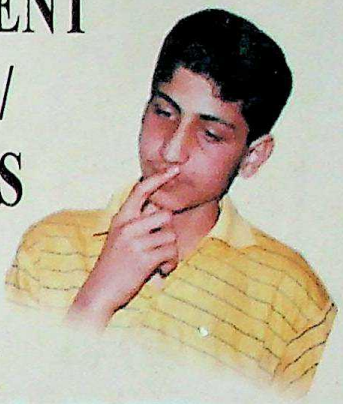

SUCCESS AND ACHIEVEMENT OF THE CHILD

M.K. RAINA RATNAKAR

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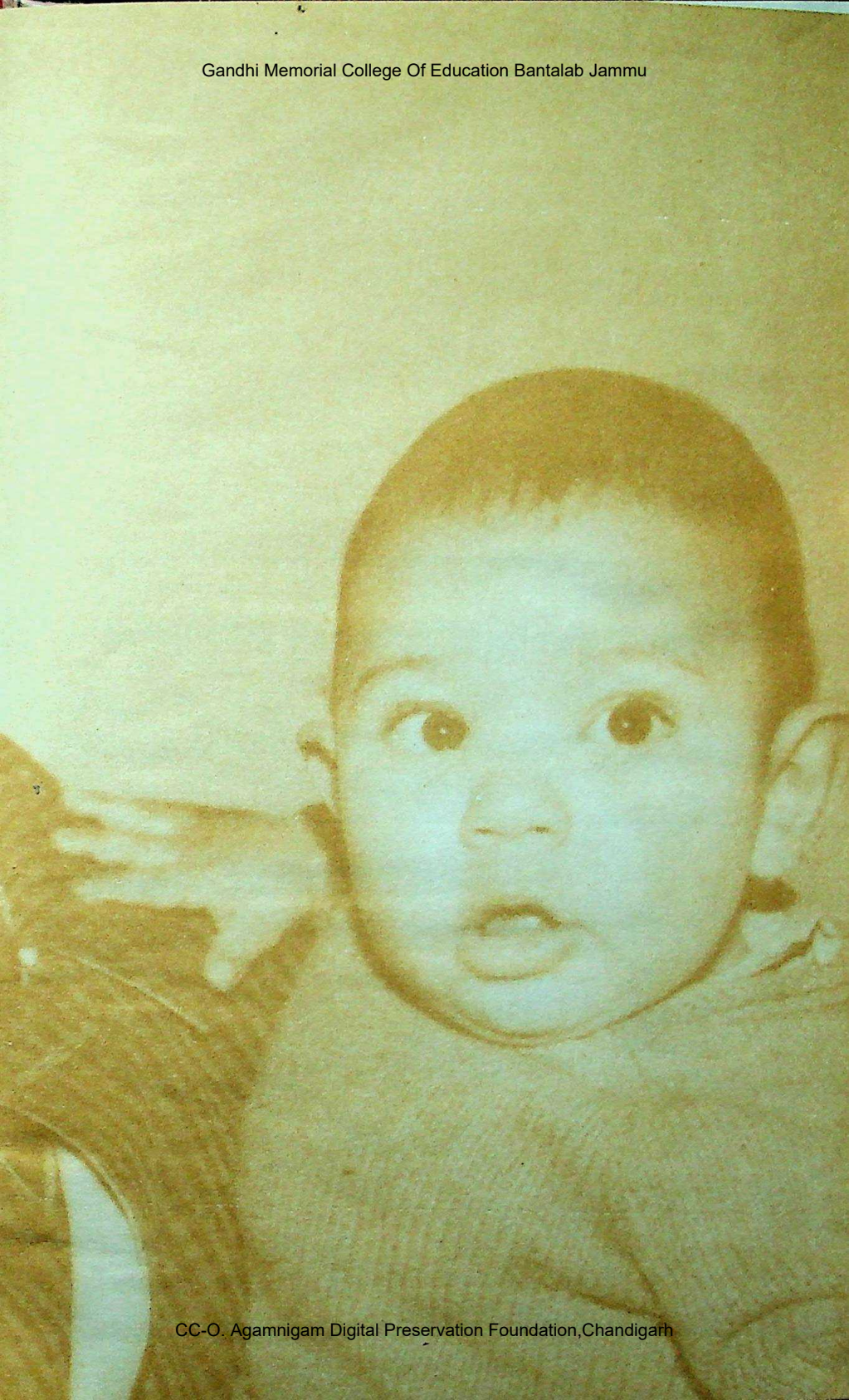

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An Intelligent Parent's/Teacher's Guide To Success and Achievement of the Child

(A step by step plan to attain top performance in children.)

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This book is dedicated to the
sweet and loving memory of my father

Late Shri Prem Nath Mujoo

&

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My mother

Late Mrs. Kamlawati Mujoo

Who loved children as much as I love them.

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An Intelligent Parent's/Teacher's Guide To Success and Achievement of the Child

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M.K. Raina Ratnakar

Scansion Publishers
New Delhi / Chandigarh

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THE AUTHOR SPEAKS

Children are the most wholesome part of the race, the sweetest, for they are the God's most fresh and finest creation. Whimsical, ingenious, mischievous, they fill the world with joy and good humour. We put them to bed with a sense of relief and greet them in the morning with delight and anticipation. We enjoy their freshness of adventure and discovery of life.

Early age of the child's life is most important, when a child registers in his being all that he sees and learns from his elders and adopts it. Besides being affected by hereditary and environmental factors, the parents are a strong influence on the child's emotional development, which has a bearing on his future. The parents then are responsible for this aspect of child's development. It is necessary to train parents and teachers to be aware of the role they play in the emotional development of the child for which it is necessary for them to have an insight into the lesser known world of the child.

The children have problems, difficulties, periods of grievous doubt and even of despair. It is about such children that I have felt an urge to write, for my experience as a parent, teacher and a broadcaster has brought me into contact with almost all the types of children belonging to

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different strata of society who go to make up the great mass of our population. I cannot help feeling that most of them have been crowded out by their richer and more stimulating and interesting brethren and sisters. I am therefore writing this book for the average ordinary parents and teachers who feel that they have a duty towards their children. I, as a professional communicator for the last twenty two years with a background of education, have tried to communicate much that will keep him or her (parent) in a satisfactory way with a feeling that I have a duty towards them (children). This book may not prove very useful and interesting to those teachers and parents who do not have a keen mental nose to scent out the weakness in the child for rectifying the same in efficient and scientific way and to bring him up as a successful citizen. But, if it shall prove helpful to my fellow communicators, teachers and parents who come down to the lowest level of understanding the ordinary ways of life, I shall be more than satisfied.

I have set down what little I have learnt about ordinary human beings from the time they are born. I have set down what little I have known about little children, about the strange things that sometimes happen to them in early life and that seem to condition them along certain lines afterwards in their youth or adulthood.

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I have also set down what little I know about the pre-adolescent boys and girls and what little - and it is still less - I have come to understand about the so-called adolescent, the boy and the girl who are blossoming into the maturity.

We owe to the child the best it has to give. The children are the wealth of the nation. The future of India - and all countries for that matter-lies in the hands, hearts and heads of our children. Its potentiality, its strength and success may be judged by what it does for its children. History will judge us on how well we prepare, educate and use them for shaping their destiny as the future citizens and statesmen of the country. The task is daunting but not beyond reach. The joys we experience today had their birth yesterday. The tragedies we suffer today were apparent in warning signs yesterday. Therefore, for a better tomorrow, we have to know and prepare our children today. What I have to say in the following chapters is intended as much for the parent as for the teacher; for the old as well as for the young. I have to communicate therefore, what true knowledge of these matters I have gathered during some years of more or less intimate contact, with all types of ordinary, average human beings beginning with the child in mother's womb and ending with those well on the prime of their youth.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank my sons and my wife whose patience and support have made me able to accomplish this task. I also thank my close friend Mr. Suresh Barge whose diligent effort made this publication possible.

All the cases mentioned in this book are true and faithfully reported, except in so far as I have naturally had to modify a few of the un-important details in order to keep strictly within the limits of decency and professional constraints. I must express my deep gratitude to all of them.

Also, a source of few examples in this book may be some newspapers and a few magazines which are not available at present. Due to non-availability of the sources, it is not possible to provide an accurate acknowledgment, as such, regardless of the source, I wish to express my gratitude to those who have contributed to this work.

Grateful acknowledgement is made to professor Usha Gadroo and Dr. G.K. Mujoo for sparing their valuable time in discussing with me certain intricate sociological and psychological problems concerning the children.

If inadvertantly I have omitted giving credit to anybody, future publication will give due credit to those.

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PART ONE

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THE LESSER KNOWN WORLD OF THE CHILD

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1

THE NEWBORN

Today, childbirth and pregnancy have been robbed of many of their glories. Many husbands feel that their pregnant wife is a nuisance to them. She appears unbeautiful, the symmetrical body has disappeared, she is weak and unable to lure the husband. When she appears in public or moves with the husband, the husband does not feel at ease. He feels ashamed if and when a passer-by passes a glance at her.

This probably is not a good sign. On the other hand, the child who is in the mother's womb is conscious, is capable of movement for months. He is in a sheltered environment, fed by the mother's blood and supported by her body. And,

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he might perhaps expect that this type of environment is going to continue forever. But suddenly without any voluntary act of his own, this whole existence comes to a cataclysmic end. The walls of his house of life break down and all that belonged to him is taken away. A new sphere of activity starts - a thousand times longer and a thousand times more interesting than that intra-uterine life which he had formerly considered the sum of his existence.

Summing up, we can say that the male does not understand the first relations of newborn child and the mother. I have seen many men disliking the babies with a feeling that the babies are not pleasant to look at. It gives me a great thrill, when I see a little hand reaching out of the cradle, the big vague open eyes and the continuous movement of the legs and the arms trying to float the body in the atmosphere.

The male parent is always far out of all contact while the child lives in such intimate association with the body of the mother that mother and child are one. Women have definitely one precious privilege that even the most effeminate of men can never possess; they bear for nine months a living human being in their own bodies. Modern life is forgetting the intense unity of experience that links together mother and child. No mere male can ever take any part in that.

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Thus, the newborn child experiences the most sudden and radical change in environment as soon as he is born. The child who literally passes from one existence to another has to undergo an adaptation, which is worse than sudden, and our civilization does not make any provision for their being? This is because that the civilized man has probably not helped the newborn child in adapting himself to an alien environment because no one has attempted to discover the urgent needs of the new life. Birth, the most difficult moment in human being's entire life, has never been recognised as a crisis for the child.

The crisis of the newborn lies in his total separation from mother who, until then had done everything for him. He grows gently in a warm fluid, protecting himself from any imbalance of temperature, light or sound, but as soon as he separates, he has to rely on his own inadequate powers. He comes to us exhausted and we do nothing to receive him and help him. No one sees in the newborn child the human being who suffers. No one appreciates the sensitivity of a little body that has never before been handled, or for his reactions to innumerable physical impressions and to every unfamiliar touch.

Most of you will say that nature provides for its own, gives support when it is necessary and

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every human being overcomes the same trials. If we observe animals, we see that the female hides her young, keeps them away from light for a certain period of time and protects them with the warmth of her body. She never permits other animals to come near or allow her young to be moved or even looked at. What I want to emphasize is that we all must understand the state of being of a newborn child. The newborn child must become the object of the knowledgeable care. Even holding him requires the utmost gentleness and he should not be moved except with great tenderness. We must understand that in the first moment, and even in the first month, the child should be kept very quiet. The infant ought to be left naked, warmed only by the air in the room itself, not clothed or wrapped in blanket for he has little body heat with which to resist temperature change and clothing is of little help.

The newborns start life with a few reflexes to help keep them alive; the most important amongst these include; (i) rooting (*to find food*), (ii) sucking (*to take in food*), (iii) gagging (*to prevent choking*) and (iv) grasping. The first time the newborn rolls on his belly and face, he senses that he is in trouble and a built in set of responses enables him to pick up his head and turn to one side to breathe. This is defensive behaviour; a reflex that keeps him alive. This also forms the basis for the future "reasoning"

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and from then on, he will turn his head well in advance.

The newborn's every instinct goes after what pleases him. You may have seen that when you offer the breast or the bottle, whatever the case may be, the baby decides how much he wants or whether he wants any or not. You may try to stimulate interest by a beautiful toy but once he feels that he had enough, he will turn his head away. This clearly shows that the newborn has developed the ability to think for himself.

This may seem trivial, but parents can help the baby with such early decision making opportunities. He learns to distinguish between things that can be sucked like breast, bottle etc. (*which relieve hunger*) and those that cannot be sucked like thumb, finger, cover of his wrappings.

Babies learn by exploring, while watched and guided by their parents. One of the ways in which the baby's mind develops is by experiencing exciting new things and filing them away. If we want our child to grow inquisitive and unafraid, we must from the very beginning provide an environment, which is both safe and stimulating. Thereafter, we must sit back and watch them discover the world and how it works for themselves. Of course, each baby's unique temperament, genes and environment will help decide which path he will take to maturity. But

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each of us is shaped by feelings and experiences we cannot remember, and the way we were treated in earliest months and years may affect our life long feelings about ourselves.

Newborns can't focus beyond distances of 20 to 24 Cms. But, within a week, they can distinguish between patterns displayed above their cribs. They will gaze longest at the human face, especially at the eyes. This is only because babies are dependent on other human beings for survival. This appears to be a highly adaptive response that is innate in the newborn.

Another adaptive response is the way a baby adjusts his body, head and mouth to the location of the nipple or teat, accommodating himself to the shape of the mother's body and it has been established that the beginnings of intelligence lie in these responses.

In the last 20 years, researchers have established that infants have amazing competence. Among other things, a day-old baby can distinguish between a male and a female voice and will always turn towards the female voice.

At 12 to 21 days, it can mimic facial expressions and at one month it can tell its mother among other females.

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In the first month, it is the pleasure seeking instinct, which equips babies to express comfort or dissatisfaction - by lying contentedly or by crying at the top of its pitch. Crying almost always has a physical reason. The baby will either be hungry or wet or in pain. Today, researchers also know that, when a baby cries, it may be expressing not just physical but emotional needs as well, and letting a baby 'cry it out' will not teach the baby the basic trust or confidence it needs to feel secure in this world.

Freud and other Psychiatrists once believed that infants were only interested in having their basic physical drives satisfied, but most mothers understand how complicated their babies really are. Research has also proved that babies are curious, sociable beings, terribly interested in the world around them. Even the tiniest infant, it has been demonstrated, is a stimulus seeking creature, who at times, would literally rather look at pictures or television than eat.

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2

SENSE OF TOUCH

The moment that the newborn is breathing properly, the doctor examines it to make sure it is normal in every way and hands it to the mother to fondle and cuddle, the first language between the newborn and the mother comes into being i.e. the language of touch.

Really the mother has done something, which no man can do - she has nurtured a new life in her uterus for 40 weeks and her baby has been born.

The emotional links between the infant and the mother are strong. It is the mother who cuddles the infant, lavishes affection in the baby; it is

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with the mother that the baby experiences its first physical contact.

A bond is also developed between infant and father, if he plays a proper role, i.e., sharing with his wife the care of the child. There is so much to learn and so much to give. Your child always continues to grasp your emotion in an unexpected way, and the moment which is both special and unforgettable, is the moment when you hold your own baby for the first time.

Touch is the primary human need right from birth. Close, secure holding communicates a sense of safety. Babies who have been touched in a sensitive, loving manner feel secure and gain a confidence, which can last into adulthood.

A baby will learn soon enough that there are times when she must accept frustration and delay, but, in the first few months, she needs a loving touch almost as much as food, because it builds that all - important sense of basic trust. Basic trust provides the emotional soil in which the baby's intelligence can grow and flourish.

Massage is a special form of touch, which is believed to have a powerful effect on muscles, lymphatic and circulatory systems. It helps strengthen the bond of the baby with you, and can give him a sense of well-being. Many parents employ a "bai" for massage which in my

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opinion robs them of the joys of parenting.

Massaging the baby yourself is a very lovely way of getting close to your baby. The kind of touching and caring that a child receives has a bearing on his self concept and feelings of worth. It has been observed that the children such as orphans who have been institutionalized at an early age suffer from a deprivation of touch and are more likely to be socially apathetic and delinquent.

Very early in infancy, the child develops crucial attitudes of being either accepted or rejected depending upon the nature of touching he is given. The act of breast feeding when the mother holds the baby close to herself is of special significance to the emotional well being of the child. In fact, breast feeding promotes an emotional bond between the mother and child. Hugging a child when he or she is hurt is an important way of comforting. By cutting off the outside world which has hurt him and engulfing him with mother's body stimulates in him the condition of womb. Touch is a form of love, assurance and appreciation. But, as the child grows older, touch gets supplemented and to an extent substituted by verbal expressions. These verbal expressions can be appreciation or sometimes can prove detrimental in the development of personality of the child and no sooner the child begins to hear or understand,

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his or her ears come in contact with the words, "don't do this" or "you should do that", "do not touch this part of your body", "do not touch that or do not taste this or handle that" yet the usual parent does not realise that to the child there is no appreciable difference between touching one part of his own body or the other part or even any other part of the body of others that may be a taboo and bring forth an exclamation of horror from parent or a teacher. The child cannot help vaguely wondering why he or she may touch one thing that gives to the fingers a pleasant sensation and yet not touch another thing that returns the same type of reaction.

This leads to a confusion in the child. If there arises in his mind the concept of being able, he somehow evades the external authority and makes his own authority sense experiments; experimental urge being always stronger than the inhibition of external authority.

What is important about the various stages of cognitive development is that each stage forms the basis for the next one. What a baby acquires in its first 18 months through the ceaseless exploration of the world and people around her is "practical intelligence". By the time he/she is approaching his/her second birth day, he/she has acquired the necessary basis for the emergence of complex mental functions like memory, imagination and language.

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No doubt, touching, the most basic form of communication is a prehistine response by which animals establish bonds of love and acceptance among themselves. The response survives among human beings. The awe with which every new mother reacts to her baby manifests itself in her gently touching and exploring the baby's face, body and limbs.

Many parents are blind to this. Without realising it they allow dangerous thoughtless sense stimulation to increase and even to misdirect the experimental urge. Sense of touch, touch of little hands, touch of lips, of cheeks, even of less frequently exposed parts of the body give a child much satisfaction.

Though it may be out of way to mention here, but it is important to note that so far as sense of touch is concerned, the young child can also be in danger. To his mind there is same satisfaction in touching the cheek of some member of the family and touching other parts of the body of that some trusted person who may be her cousin or uncle. Many a time, it has happened that a cousin or an uncle has become far too intimate with the girl child in the family. When such a thing happens and the child in her thoughtlessness tells the mother what has happened; the cousin or the uncle denies the whole story and the child is labelled as a liar.

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This hurts the child far more than the physical contact which has taken place today and can be forgotten tomorrow. On the other hand, the cousin or the uncle will, all his life, hate this particular child because he knows that the so called lie she has told is really the very truth itself. And, worse still happens if the child never tells her mother, for as she comes to understand as to what had happened, she either turns against her cousin or uncle and the dislikes and hatreds for them may persist during the child's entire life, or she succumbs or surrenders to their likings with or without enjoying what is done to her.

But the fact remains that the genuine affectionate touch of parents to the children of any age brings solace to the child.

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3

A HEALTHY START

A baby-any baby, not only our own, has to be looked upon with love, concern and an overwhelming need to take care and to provide the best. For every parent the aim is to perfect this role - of being a parent. Almost all the parents try to obtain the best possible information on child care. As intelligent and educated parents which we are, we tend to rely upon the guidance of a physician / paediatrician or a child specialist and we go for regular check-ups, check of height and weight, periodical immunizations etc.

I have seen that almost all the parents always forget that normal healthy state of the baby has

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the top priority.

What is a normal healthy state?

According to me the normal healthy state is a state in which a person feels at every moment of living, a joy and zest for life, a sense of fulfilment, and a sense of harmony all around. It is the confidence, and a love for life that radiates right out of us. And we just need to look at the child to be reminded of this truth.

Children can be reared and cared for in such a manner that their suffering from chronic childhood diseases including severe rashes, running nose, fever, vomiting, constipation or diarrhoea is minimized. Once full care is taken by parents, the children can live with robust vigour and fearless drive for life.

Signs of a healthy child.

1. Bright and sparkling wide open eyes.
2. Cheerful and contented disposition.
3. Mental alertness and brightness.
4. A good appetite
5. Absence of vomiting.

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6. Normal bowel movements. The colour and consistency of the faeces should be normal.

7. Sound and continuous sleep all night with eyes and mouth closed.

8. A steady gain in weight, from healthy growth and not from overeating.

9. Absence of emaciation.

10. No evidence of pain or discomfort.

Psychological tests have confirmed that breast-fed babies suffer much less from mental traumas and are generally well adjusted, healthy children. Also, the human milk is form fitted to the human baby's digestive system. It is easier for a baby to digest human milk and therefore more energy is conserved for the baby's brain and body to develop.

Milk formulae were originally developed as a substitute for babies, whose mothers for one reason or another were unable to nurse, but unfortunately due to many mothers false notion that giving mother's milk to the baby will disfigure them; the formulae milks surfaced in the market. Eventually such formulae came to be routinely prescribed.

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Eczema is a common problem among formula fed-babies. Many a time the babies have become un-naturally over weight by formula milk. .

The reactions to mother's milk is less frequent and much less toxic and harmful. Also, while nursing, the child continues to hear the rhythm of the mother's breathing and heart-beat, as it did in the womb. This induces a closeness and security bonding that is necessary for the baby's development.

By providing the child the basic requirement of nature-natural diet, fresh air, rest, freedom of movement and expression and a wholesome testing environment, we assure him his health. Fruits, vegetables, nuts and sprouts are body food after mother's milk. So, start with breast milk and thereafter move on to other nutrients. Fruits are energisers and body cleausers. Vegetables and nuts are body builders. Balance these food items in the best possible way. Give them in abundance to your children. Don't give fragmented or processed food stuffs to children.

I have always emphasized that the first few years of child's diet is of great importance because it builds stamina and aids the growth of the child. Though I have growth of the child. Though I have very clearly said that the infant should be fed on mother's milk necessarily atleast for first few months, but when it is time to wean the child,

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then put him on a healthy diet gradually. The same should be highly nutritious. However, a list of recipes is given as under:-

1. Mashed banana blended in a smooth paste with a little milk and honey to taste.

2. Fresh Chikoo blended in smooth paste with a little milk.

3. Freshly prepared fruit juice.

4. Peeled, chopped apple, blended into a fine paste with a little honey.

5. Yolk of a partially boiled egg. The yolk of the egg should gradually be replaced by a full partially boiled egg.

6. Dried, deseeded dates, chopped finally and cooked in milk.

7. Almonds, (two to three in number) chopped in a fine paste with milk.

The parents can think of the following as a day time meal for the child.

1. Take a potato. Boil it till it becomes soft. Mash it into a smooth paste. Add a little pepper powder, salt and whipped curd. Serve. The child will slowly develop a taste for the

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potato and thereafter will like it the most.

2. Take a sweet potato. Boil it till soft. Peel it and blend it with a little milk. Grind it to smooth consistency. Add a little pepper powder and salt. Serve and see how the child develops a taste for this meal.

3. Take one tb spoon of rice flour. Add ½ a cup of water. Boil. Cook for sometime. Add milk to give smooth consistency and honey, to taste. Serve.

Most of the time the stomach of the baby is full because the babies drink milk. Do not at any time force feed. When he/she is hungry they will ask for food and as a parent you should know his/her language of asking the feed. It should be remembered that sugar, chocolates, fragmented snack foods, cold drinks make children hyperactive. Substitute these with dates and dry fruits and see your children change. Avoid all sorts of oily food stuffs and junk food for children. Always give food to your child with responsibility. Be aware of why you are feeding your child, what for and with what reason. The child needs wholesome food with nutrients known and unknown. Eating wholesome food is the only way to good health for the child. Remember that health can never come from packed-bottled stuff.

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4

EXCESSIVE ENERGY AND VITALITY

No doubt, the joys of holding the first born in your arms are boundless, but this should be very clear to all the young mothers that right from the time of conception, the onus is on the mother-to-be for it is she who has to take care to nurture its growth in the womb and once the baby is born, her duties and responsibilities increase two fold and she has always to be on her toes trying to strike a right balance between being a wife and a mother.

Motherhood has ever changing demands. During the initial stages, these centre around meeting the little one's basic needs when the baby is just a helpless bundle of moans and

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groans. So, the first year of the baby sees the mother through breast-feeding, nappy changing, sterilizing the bottles, disinfecting his clothes and keeping irregular sleeping / waking hours. If she is a working mother, then she has also added tension to cope with guilt pangs gnawing at her for leaving behind the little one for whom no amount of grandparental care can substitute the maternal warmth.

Along with bringing joy and cheer to the parents, the newborn is responsible for bringing exhaustion and boredom to the parents, in particular the mother. While the father goes off each morning for a day of adult company, the mother is faced with the daily routine of caring for the baby. Even if both partners work hard at sharing their baby, problems can still arise. But, she may have mixed feelings when her partner is as good at caring for the baby as she is. The strong and large male hand can give re-assurance and security to a restless baby. This leaves the father very successful, but the fact remains that motherhood implies an endless list of adjustments involving sleepless nights for administering doses of medicine at proper time, training the baby to toileting, feeding habits and plan her schedule in a way so that the child's schedule is not disturbed. The mother is required to curtail many of her interests and adapt herself to the increasing needs and demands of the child which increase manifold when it has

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learned to stand up in an erect position and made himself mobile, and as the days pass, the child gains enough energy and vitality which needs an outlet.

In the wake of militancy at the Valley of Kashmir in the year 1990, many families had to migrate from Kashmir to many parts of the country. I along with my family migrated to Jammu from Srinagar in March, 1990. Once I happened to visit a relative of mine at Jammu during the migratory period. The family was living in a solitary room of a hotel at Residency Road. The room was totally dark with only one window which was just below the ceiling in the room, and the room opened in lane which also was dark. The room was a multipurpose room with kitchen in one corner, bed room at the other and drawing room between the two.

The head of the family is in police department, so he was on duty at Srinagar while his two children, one aged five and the other only fifteen months were with mother. The mother was constitutionally weak, anaemic and seemed to be totally in run down condition.

As soon as I entered the room everything in room seemed to be in a scattered condition though the lady tried to hide everything under the cot in the corner and I was not also able to make out as to what was where because of

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extreme darkness in the room. However, a small space was created for me in the corner, and I accommodated myself in the same. While I was speaking to the lady, i.e. the mother of the children, the fifteen month old baby with the time frame of just five minutes upset the water bucket, defecated in the kitchen and nearly burnt himself in the corner kitchen.

The mother totally worn out as the keeper of an un-restrained little cub, a nice one, no doubt, who did not mean any harm, but was living in a too narrow cage totally restraining the development of his vital forces.

The mother observed restraint in my presence, but when the child began to throw condiments on the floor, the mother registered a good slap on the cheek of the child. The child got unbalanced and started rolling across the room.

The slap on the cheek of the child sent shock waves throughout my body and I took the child in my arms and a little order was restored in that cell.

Most of us will be aware that taking a little, tiny child full of vigour as they are and also full of vitality that it has; has to overflow somehow even if it means making life more difficult for its parents and is it not the duty of every parent to allow the child to live this tiny age to

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the utilisation of all its excessive energy which definitely finds an outlet in one way or the other. This excessive vitality of the child is to be channelized in such a way so that the child does not hurt itself or endanger the lives and property of others. He has to be allowed to gain confidence about the world around him and has to know that his welcome in the world is a warm one, both to him and his inner feelings. He has to be allowed to experience for himself by allowing him to hither and thither in an open space with of course an attention on him.

Roughly fifteen years back, I was on a holiday at Gulmarg, in the valley of Kashmir. A young man, father of a child and an expert skier managed to get rid of his five years old son on some pretext and came for skiing. The child, an intelligent one, followed him from the hotel room and showed him his face at the lounge. He quite naturally wanted to attract some of his father's attention towards himself. He started asking for one or the other thing and began to put questions to him about this and that. The father got fed up and too keen to get rid of him again and did his best to do so, but the child returned again and raised his voice to force his father to take his notice. Finally, I found the father shouting; if you don't leave me alone, I will pack up and return to Srinagar. The expression of the child showed that he got least disturbed by his threat and did not take the same seriously,

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because he perfectly knew that his father is not a man of strong will, so he continuously carried on poisoning his existence with his presence.

From this, I could only gather that if the father would also have been really an intelligent man he could have devoted a fixed time to his son who would not have created such a problem for him. But, unfortunately the poor child had probably never managed to obtain his father's undivided attention so he had got used to having to persecute him, until he eventually drew from him the true attention which he could feel was his right.

One day, I went to get kerosene oil. As usual, I was the last man in the queue, so after keeping my tin in the queue, I preferred to be out of queue. Many children were playing cricket at the busy Ambphalla road of Jammu. One five year old boy ran after the ball, when the same was hit back by the batsman. The fact that big buses and trucks cannot always stop in time did not bother him. When he was just being run over by a bus, I just managed to grab him in time, but to my surprise I could feel that the boy was totally unperturbed and laughed at me. Since I could not bear it, I hunted around for anybody who could be with him. I caught hold of the youngster and began to auction him and asked everyone in the queue, if anyone knows to whom he belongs. An arm stretched out of the queue;

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the owner, a young woman without sacrificing her precious position in the queue, grasped the child and slapped him forcefully saying; that will teach you! On telling her that she has done a wrong thing by slapping him, she rebuked me and said, "a housewife knows how to bring up the child and knows what is what; You go and be in the queue at your own position".

Probably most of us do not feel that the little boys are not supposed to learn anything from this except that their parents distribute blows or caresses on them according to their own wish and as a sort of a fixed time table. Instead of explaining the danger of any wrong action by the child to him or her which is the prime duty of a parent in such cases and also instead of telling him about the probable risk involved and channelising the vitality in other way, we just finish our duty by a very quick slap on his cheek which instead of abstaining them from a wrong action makes them to repeat the same again and again.

Thus the child creates a practical philosophy, which will stay firmly with it throughout life, but which will be extremely badly adapted to circumstances.

Most of the parents unfortunately think that the children which have been sent to them are wild animals to be tamed. I feel that sometimes even

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the trainer in the circus knows more about psychology than many parents because he takes the nature of the animal into account.

Everyone of us, the parents should understand that when bringing up a child, we must first try objectively to ascertain his physical and mental characteristics and his real natural tendencies. Our action should be based on our discovery and the child's natural aptitudes should be channelised in a very nice and productive manner. Education must above all be positive and its aim should not be to knock down rough edges of personality.

A healthy infant or a child moves about, misbehaves and this all is quite normal. Every parent should understand that he, i.e., the child has excessive vitality and is not happy sitting still for long periods as grown ups. He has muscular needs to satisfy which no longer bother an adult. His universal curiosity is appetite which drives him to acquire what he lacks; would you deprive him of this will to know. Every child should be left with widest margin of activity even if the same creates any worry or anxiety in the parent. If speed breakers are to be put in his way, then it was better for the father not to impregnate his wife and see the child to take birth in the open atmosphere.

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5

THE NEWLY MOBILE BABY

When children reach the second half of the first year, they start crawling and climbing, making accidental falls, poisonings and other serious mishaps. Many parents react by restricting their children to a small but safe area. They then provide abundance of toys to keep the children occupied and occasionally let them loose for supervised 'learning' sessions.

Every creature who comes to this world is not only a physical being, but has latent in it, the functions which depend on instinct. All instinct is manifest in movement and represents the distinctive characteristics of the species.

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The phenomenon of the child's helplessness at birth has been the subject of philosophical speculation and the same has always attracted the attention of psychologists and educationists. Much survives from the period of helplessness, locked and buried within the subconscious and the effects of infancy can generate grave psychological consequences in the daily life of the child. Those who are of the opinion that the body of the infant is passive are thinking in a wrong way. Many adults feel that their so called supervised 'learning' sessions have borne fruit in the child growing up in a disciplined way. In the face of this magnificent but late development of the child, the adult is equally wrong who assumes that such development has come about solely through his care and upbringing. Such an assumption generates a sense of duty and responsibility, the parent sees himself literally as the force which animates the child and his inner life, therefore he acts externally upon the child as one would upon a piece of creative work giving suggestions and directives in order to develop intelligence, sensitivity and will. The adult unfortunately ends up behaving that the child is his creation and he occupies a place in the child's life quite like that of a God which is far from reality.

Having once understood this, the adult must change his attitude towards the child. That

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tender, graceful little being, whom we adore and whom we overwhelm with material things and who is almost like a toy to us, must inspire reverence in us. We should understand that it is the delicate life of the child which is flowering into consciousness and putting the senses in contact with the environment.

In homes where children are developing impressive intellectual abilities, I have generally seen that the parents often deal with them differently. Rather than restricting their children, they simply redesign their homes, making most of the living area safe for newly mobile babies. This gives the children access to a very large, interesting learning environment in which they could experiment with, explore and investigate a whole world of exciting and enriching objects virtually at will.

Also, many a time, I have seen that the parents overemphasise the importance of their child's spoken vocabulary. It has to be borne in mind that many well - developing children do not say much until they are almost two years old, though their capacity to understand simple words and instructions begins well before their first birthday. Usually when they are between six and eight months old, unfortunately, most of the parents do not talk to these newly mobile babies as they have a notion that talking to baby is futile as it does not talk back. Due to this

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many parents miss out on many months worth of opportunities for teaching language. In homes where children are developing impressive linguistic abilities, it has been noticed that the parents talk to them frequently almost from birth. Moreover, once the children showed an awareness of language or were able to say a few words coherently, the parents in such homes did not immediately push them in vocabulary exercises. Instead, they simply waited for their children to approach them many a time every day for comfort, assistance or to share their excitement over some discovery. When this happened, the parents pushed and used simple language to talk.

The parents of these children are also ready and willing to provide new learning opportunities, not through expensive learning books or some specific games but by letting these small children show interest in very simple household activities. In other words, instead of setting aside specific time, the parents set up an interesting environment and allowed the children to indulge in their natural curiosity and followed the children's leads.

Social skills are also beginning to develop during the first three years but many parents, especially first timers make the mistake of assuming that children come civilized, or at least acquire common courtesies on their own.

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The fact is that we do not understand the child very well. This ignorance is a consequence of the subconscious apprehension and annoyance we manifest towards him from the first moments of his life, an instinctive defensiveness about our possessions; even if they are worth nothing. Our attitude develops logically from these beginnings, and we are obsessed with fears that the child will disturb the daily course of our lives or disfigure and also make our homes dirty. When we have a child in the home, not only do we deal with him by rushing to save our things from destruction and also even by fleeing the house to save our peace of mind, but we also suppress the child's so-called caprices so that he does not become a slave to them and develops finally into a well bred child. This way we commit a blunder. I have observed that during the first and second year of his life, the child wants to see objects always in their accustomed places and used in their customary way. If any one disturbs the order, the child feels deeply offended and frustrated and tries to put the objects back at their right places.

My mother had the habit of taking my child out on her shoulders while on a walk. One day she carried him in her lap because she had developed spondylitis and was not able to carry him on her shoulder. The child began to weep bitterly. No one could understand why he could not calm down, until she put him on her

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shoulder. What had disturbed the child was to see himself in an unfamiliar position.

My father was in the habit of putting a turban on his head. After some time he abandoned turban and started putting on a cap. My child who had always seen him with a turban on would start crying and weeping as soon as my father would come nearer to him or make a try to lift him. For sometime, we were unable to understand as to why he does it but no sooner my father put on the turban, the child felt happy and started playing with my father.

When we were at Srinagar, my mother out of great love for my child would bathe him in a tub and that too in a particular way. During winter months she would go to Delhi, so my wife would take the responsibility of bathing him. The child cried every time my wife would bathe him and we would be at a loss to understand it. I had watched my mother bathing the child in the tub. We then tried to bathe him in the tub and also the same way his grandmother would bathe him. To our great astonishment the child felt very happy and cooperated in every way for bathing. It was very clear that the child's drive for order was a part of his life and he defended it as best he could. Many people have been calling this drive as "misbehaviour in a child".

I have seen many a parents punishing their

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children for such behaviour because they do not understand children's acts for themselves and instead continue to see them as forms of misbehaviour. We should know that these defects finally disappear and are not worth worrying about. When we begin to have this approach to child, we begin to understand many things and begin to love the child.

The newborn child is incapable of doing anything. He cannot make himself heard except in sobs or screams and we come running as we would to one who needs help. It is only after a number of months or even a year that he is able to make certain sounds which we can call voice. The physical and psychological phenomena of growth is essentially a mysterious process in which one form of energy is changed into another which gives a human child the use of its limbs, speech and also the power to express its own will.

This manifestation must find us sympathetic because in the creative period, it is our duty to understand, also with the aid of scientific means, the psychological needs of the child and to prepare a vital environment for him. It is the first principle in the development and it is a science with which the intelligent adult must collaborate, for there will be a vast amount of work before the last word can be said about human development.

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6

FEELING OF NEGLECT AND JEALOUSY

If we turn from the relationship of child to parent to the relationship of child to child, we enter the unhappy domain of unspoken jealousies, feelings of neglect and hurt feelings. I am of the opinion that the first child should not be made to wait long for the next brother or sister to come. The child who is four or five years old is the recipient of all the caresses and the centre of all the family interests. When the boy of four is presented with a baby sister, who absorbs all the attention and demands all the mother's care, bitterly resents this intrusion. But, if the second child is born when the first child is only a year or two old, then the adaptation of the first child to the newcomer is not so difficult.

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The child who after being surrounded on every side by a parent's care and attention, suddenly finds himself or herself apparently neglected, suffers more intensely than we realise the situation. She may dislike the new brother; she may tease or torment him as he grows up; she may hate him all his life, without knowing why, or she may do something still worse; she may feel that she is less charming and less attractive as compared to the new baby; she may be filled with a hopeless jealousy without being able to react to it, so that she surrenders at an early age to the idea that she can never compete with him because she is somehow an inferior specimen.

Sometimes the first child is a girl. The parents want a son. The second child is born and that too is a girl. From her earliest days she knows somehow that she was not wanted. All the worse for her if a son is finally born and is clever and better looking than she is. The ordinary child can't distinguish between dependence and love. He or she measures the mother's love by the attention that the mother gives him or her. If the mother has been over indulgent with her first child, if she has been always hovering over him, helping him to dress, watching and taking care of every action of his and has not made any attempt to help the child for independent action, then on the arrival of the new baby definitely there has to be trouble; for the new

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baby is naturally more dependent on the mother than the three or four year child and no matter how much the mother tries she can no longer give the first child the constant attention. So, when this attention is of necessity and focused on the new comer, the first child naturally feels that the mother does not love him or her any more. At every turn he or she misses something that her mother used to do for him or her. Many a time I have seen that as and when the child is not able to do anything himself or herself because every thing was done for him or her by the mother, the mother starts rebuking because the child is not trying to help himself or herself as the child has not been trained to do so. She/ he feels love - lorn, neglected and that too without any fault of her/his own. The girl child begins to compare herself with the new baby brother. She feels that he is a boy and probably more desirable than a girl. This lays the beginning of unhappy comparison. The child does her best to love the new brother or sister but mixed with that love is a feeling of envy or an early surrender to the sense of comparative inferiority that may persist all through life. Moreover, the child who feels neglected turns on the person who seems to him the cause of it all i.e. either the baby brother or sister. Hatreds, antipathies and antagonisms are based on no deeper foundations than these alone. Many lasting impressions are made by certain actions that sometimes make no impression on the adult

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mind. Bringing up and bringing down of a little child is one of the most complex and difficult tasks than can possibly be set for a human understanding to cope with.

Many parents are of the opinion that there is complete union and perfect understanding between their children; but one for that must not indulge in wishful thinking and keep his mind closed to incompatibilities of character, opposing tendencies, differences of taste and last but not the least, the jealousies which one way or the other exist between brothers and sisters.

Jealousy is one of the most evil faults, but it is a sentiment and something against which reasoning is powerless. It is something like a sensation which no amount of argument can modify. Only some other sentiment can combat and substitute it. Jealousy can be tackled on an emotional plane. Parents who love their children equally find jealousies unjustified and senseless, but if they try to remember what they were like at that age, they probably can understand. If the existence of these sentiments is ignored in children or the same is fought with rebukes, anger and even punishment, then parents are supposed to be doing the worst things for the children. A jealous child should be allowed to express his feelings towards the person he is jealous of and no opportunity for increase of conflicts and breeding of opposition and

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injustice should be kept alive in the mind of the child.

It has been seen that an elder child can be jealous of younger because he is smaller and therefore less strictly treated and gets more attention from his mother. The elder child becomes jealous because he feels that he had to yield a position to him (the younger child) which he thought was exclusively his right. In the same way, a younger child may be jealous of an elder child because the elder is allowed to do certain things which the younger child is not allowed to do, because the elder has a quick power of understanding and is treated more like a grown up.

A less beautiful girl can be jealous of her sister because she thinks that her sister is more attractive. A colleague of mine who has only two daughters, one day told me that there is great misunderstanding between her daughters and the same dates back to their early childhood. Her elder daughter one day felt that her dresses were out of date and asked for new ones. The mother was ready to buy some more dresses for her with this intention that the old ones could be passed on to her younger sister. Though the mother meant no harm but it was a biter pill for the younger child to swallow. When I told her that the seed of jealousy has been sown by her in two sisters she really felt astonished.

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Extra care has to be taken in seeing that justice is meted out to all the children in early childhood. Parents should be extremely careful in seeing that feelings of jealousy do not emerge between children.

I have had many opportunities of watching children at play; one moment they are very friendly; a moment later they all are abusing and fighting with each other and after some time every thing is forgotten. Long back in my childhood at Srinagar, I saw two brothers, usually great friends, chase each other with murderous intentions. The elder one had to dive in river Jehlum (of Kashmir valley) to save himself. His brother who could not swim decided to see him off swimming in the river. Such type of quarrels are not important, but once intervention with an intention of having a side is done, it raises a suspicion that adults have behaved unjustly and the same gives rise to feeling of frustration and jealousy in children. Once the feeling of jealousy enters the mind of the child, then the same always finds something or the other to keep itself alive.

Another colleague of mine has a daughter who is just six years old. Recently she i.e. my colleague delivered a baby boy. When this baby brother came in the home, the sister showed all the correct and usually expected sentiments of admiration and delight for a period of

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approximately three months. After sometime, one day, when the mother was busy in the kitchen, the brother was allowed to remain alone with the sister. Several minutes later, the mother heard screams of the baby. When she came out of the kitchen, she saw her daughter with a needle in her hand piercing the same in the feet of the baby boy. The little girl was soundly beaten, but this colleague of mine had not realised that this action had been done deliberately by the girl and she really intended to hurt her brother. All this was due to the fact that the little baby was getting more attention of the mother, and the girl who was getting more affection had felt neglected due to which she had become jealous. Thus, it is very important to note and realise the impact which the arrival of a new member of the family, brother or sister, can have on the other child or children if undue attention is paid to the newcomer. The situation is less acute if and when the family has less children, but that does not necessarily mean that there are no possibilities of jealousies in such families.

Many parents feel that nothing can be done and the child has to put himself into the frame of changed circumstances. No doubt, but the child has to be helped by making him realise that the arrival of the newcomer has not altered in any way her mother's love. He or she has to be made to understand that the baby is not able to do

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even the slightest thing by himself. He or she has to be told that the baby belongs to the whole family and therefore belongs to him also. Instead of giving children the strict instructions not to go near the baby which is generally done by many mothers, the children can be told to look after the baby. Mothers who have just given birth to a son should think of other children also - they should not be made to suffer for the new happiness.

Parents should know that the hatred born of jealousy can go to an extent where heavy prices shall have to be paid by the parents for the development of the same in children. I know of a boy of twelve years giving a push to his younger sister into the fire which had been lit by children in the compound. The girl fell into the fire and burnt her legs. When asked as to why did he do so, the boy said that she had been given three pieces of meat while I was given only one piece of meat at lunch. The boy was a little naughty, hence was not liked by the parents and it was also found that the parents would take delight in praising his sister in his presence.

Many parents and teachers are in the habit of making comparisons between children. This generally happens when the examination reports of children are sent to parents. Definitely one of the children must have scored more marks than the other. As soon as the parents begin to

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compare the talent and scholarly success of one with the other, the same moment the seed of jealousy is sown.

Parents should realise that children like this can suffer and they should always try to understand the why of the problem. The best way to help the children is to enlighten them, talk to them and sort out with them. The child initially will start by denying but in the end he will realise that you are right, and from then he will acknowledge the facts of the case and he will stop feeling hurt. He will try to find a natural place in the home and will no longer want everything for himself. Try to make him aware of the subconscious conflict inside him and the things will work smoother. Bright light casts out shade and the sunlight makes unwholesome places clean.

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7

FEAR

When I was roughly four years old, my mother was responsible for creating fear of darkness in me. On the second floor of our house, there was a room which was used by us for storing paddy. This room was totally dark with no window except a small door, just at the top of it, and exactly near the ceiling which would only allow a man to creep into the room. Whenever I would make an attempt to enter this room, my mother would at once say that '**Khokhe**' is there. A strange picture of '**Khokhe**' had been created by my mind, whom I would always think as an ape like creature sitting in the corner of this store like structure with bright staring eyes looking at children with a wish to snatch them away from their parents. I had developed a strong notion

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that whosoever amongst children would make an attempt to enter this unit of our dwelling unit i.e. paddy store; he will not be able to come out of it as 'Khokhe' will retain him there. Whenever I would find any darkness anywhere, I would always feel that '**Khokhe**' will be there also. With this conception of '**Khokhe**' in my mind, I had created many creatures of darkness in my mind. It took a number of years to wipe off the fear of 'Khokhe' and darkness from my mind. So, when a child tells me about his fear, I feel very close to him, because I understand perfectly what he has to go through.

All of us have listened to stories which have frightened us. The child builds the most terrifying stories on darkness, and any noise or hissing during the darkness makes him to think of many imaginative creatures, particularly if his taste for fear has been encouraged. So parents have to take great care to see that no terrifying stories are told to children.

Sometimes it is very interesting to see a child with a particular fear of one thing. A child of six who happened to be the son of my cousin was hostilely inclined towards his father because his father was in the habit of scolding him often with a particular expression on his face. The family lived in Delhi. One day the father came home with a picture book of wild animals in his hand. I was also with them during those days.

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The picture book was opened by the child in the presence of everybody and he began to enjoy all the animals, but seemed to be frightened on seeing some particular picture of a particular animal. When asked to point out the picture which was the source of his fear, he showed the picture of a cat which had big round blue eyes. The father asked his son what did he find so alarming about the animal, which was, after all, only a drawing on a piece of paper. His son replied quite simply, "your eyes are like this cat, when you scold me".

This explanation by a subconscious process of reasoning showed the real reason of the boy's fear and his hostile reaction towards his father. Childhood fears often originate in the feeling of guilt. Young children generally feel hostile towards some adult-their father or mother. Unable to express their hostility, they inevitably set out to find the derivative image of the adult which expresses both their hostility and fear. They find this image in one of their possessions, the book or the toy and the object chosen is immediately identified with the grown up in question.

Childhood fears reveal so much of the unconscious feelings of the child, but unfortunately many parents do not accept their correct interpretation. Many parents do not accept that children's minds have temporary

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feelings of hostility with also the true love which they have for them.

We had in our childhood many crows on the nearby house roofs in the evenings coming from the sky and going towards the sky. These crows would be crowing at the pitch of their voice towards the evenings in large groups on these house roofs. Whenever I would ask my father as to why these crows were crowing at the pitch of their voice; he would reply that they are the messengers of God and are speaking out the messages of God. They are watching children and are taking the information to God regarding the bad actions of bad children. I was ordered by my parents to sit calmly towards evenings so that the God does not become aware of my bad deeds. This took the shape of a fear in my mind. After some years when I came to know that my father was telling a lie, I developed a terrible hostility in my mind towards my father, but his did not in any way tarnish the image which I had in my mind regarding my father.

Our house at Srinagar was in the vicinity of a cemetery. A little seven year old boy of a muslim family living nearby our house would frequently quarrel with his father and got on very badly with him. The boy would often be seen intensely occupied with burial games and would declare that only job that interested him most was that of an undertaker. He was also prepared to

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abandon a marriage project with his beautiful and charming cousin, who had stated bluntly to him that she was not interested in a profession of that kind of her husband.

One morning the boy greatly frightened told of a dream he had during night. He had dreamt that his father had died, and that for the funeral he had made the most wonderful coffin ever seen. He had tears in his eyes and hardly dared to look at his father.

When this was explained to the son that the little difficulties which he has with his father made him unconsciously wish his father dead and the same was very harmlessly fulfilled in his dream. Besides this the same was made up by giving his father a wonderful coffin. The son was further reassured that no harm has been done or will be done by his dream to his father and his father is very much alive. The father was also told to understand his child and treat him like a friend and not look upon him as his enemy. The child seemed reassured and the burial games stopped immediately.

In the year 1959 when I was hardly seven years old, the cousins of my father unauthorisedly and against my father's wishes took a water pipe connection from the main water supply pipe at the municipal lane to their houses underneath a piece of land which belonged to my father. This

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was done by them not because that they had no alternative, and could not use their own land but they somehow or the other wanted to hurt the feelings of my father and also teach him a lesson for the reason that he being slightly better off at that time had constructed a small house for himself and his family which none of these cousins had been able to do at that time. Actually, they had felt jealous of him.

When my father objected to their laying of pipe, all his cousins along with their sons began to abuse and harass him. Not only that, they also attacked and hit him violently.

He tried to fight back but could not because of being a lone person against so many of them. Their planning was well thought and they carried out the same in a phased manner. I still remember the incident vividly. One, Mr. Kanhya Lal, caught hold of the arms and legs of my father in such a way so that he could exhibit on one hand that he does not want to give rise to a fight while on the other hand he wanted that my father should not be in a position to fight back. This he did because he had been told to do so. Not only this, some of the members of his in-laws had come to visit him and he wanted to show them that he is a powerful young man (being recently married that time). The others began to abuse, harass and hit my father. I don't want to name the attackers here because most

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of them are dead, but I would like to name two persons, Mr. Pyarey Lal and Mr. Manu Jee (two brothers), who came to the rescue of my father after understanding the sinister designs of the attackers and made them understand that they are unjust in their action.

When all this was going on, and I (a very small child) was moving around my father and trying to fight back in my own way and also taking care that my father is not harmed and hurt, I was also slapped and hit by one of the cousins of my father. But, after the Mujoo brothers, i.e., Mr. Pyarey Lal and Mr. Manu Jee made it clear that their attack is unwarranted and warned them not to continue, then alone they began to withdraw.

Till that day no violence of any sort had been seen by me. Even, I was unable to understand why all this happened and why did they attack an honest and a straightforward gentleman.

The memories of this episode are still fresh in my mind and even today whenever my mind reveals those moments, I, in my heart of hearts still curse those cousins of my father and also their sons.

My purpose here is not to tell you what happened long ago in a fight in which my father and his cousins were involved but definitely I

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want to communicate to you about the deep scar which this incident left on my mental and physical make up.

For a number of years, whenever and wherever I would see any of the cousins of my father, I would begin to perspire profusely even if it would be very cold or I would begin to shiver. Sometimes it would happen to me at the slightest thought of the fight episode or even without any reason.

My father detected it happening to me many a time and I was taken to Dr. Ali Jan who was the most renowned physician of J&K state at that time. Dr. Ali Jan very clearly said, "either this boy is having a step mother or there is some fear in his mind. Some tragic happening has taken place in his presence and the same has left him perturbed, disturbed and fearful; it is the deep rcoted fear in his mind which manifests itself into perspiration or shivering. Love and protection from parents and those who come in contact with him and also removal of the fearful environment which has surfaced his fear will cure him".

Time proved to be the best healer and with the passage of time, parental love and protection, my fear vanished and the attacks of perspiration and shiverings also vanished.

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As said in earlier paras, it took years to calm all my fears; and so, whenever any child talks to me about his fear, I feel close to him because, I understand perfectly what he has to go through.

My case is not certainly an isolated one, and the number of children who shiver or perspire under the influence of a fear is considerable. Some admit it and others cover it up, because they are still more frightened of being scolded or having sarcasms heaped upon them. Tip-toe into their bedrooms at night, just after they have gone to bed, and you will see them coiled up like a tight spring, trying to offer the smallest possible target to the monsters of their imagination, the bedclothes pulled up over their heads and nearly stifling them lying asleep in a tense position which promises troubled and unhealthy slumber.

We all remember stories which frightened us. Darkness plays the greatest part in most of them; in this respect the child is like the savage of the primitive tribe, who fears the approach of a night, because the night is the ally of the works of the supernatural forces against which the mind of man is powerless. The clear outline of things seen in the light does not allow of ghosts; but at night sinister creaking noises are the starting point of all the child's wild imaginings. He builds the most terrifying detective stories on them, particularly if his taste for fear has been

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encouraged.

Great care must be taken if the parent really has the child's well being at heart. True, a great many parents do not tell children terrifying stories, but they do not sufficiently realise that servants and other children are quite capable of doing so. They must realise the fears which a child can have and speak frankly about them; certainly not teasing the child about it. If they did, the immediate reaction of the child would be to hide his anxieties, to shut up like a trap, which would tend to confirm him in his fears and make them more difficult to get rid of them later on.

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8

BED-WETTING

Eeshan was seven when I saw him. He had never stopped wetting his bed every night. He was a premature child and had always shown frequent signs of lack of control over his central nervous system. Some of his movements were awkward and they seemed to lack precision and get where they wanted by a rather roundabout way. On asking his father about his other physical features, he told me that his testicular development is also retarded. One testicle was small and the other had not descended into the scrotum.

I felt interested in this boy and I tried to probe into his mental faculties. I did not find the boy backward but his work in school was

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unsatisfactory. I did not find him unintelligent because he had great powers of observation and was capable of the most pertinent remarks. I could find that it was because of lack of precision in his bodily movements that he failed to concentrate his attention fully on one thing. Well developed emotionally, he was excessively attached to his mother who, although she adored him, failed to show him enough tenderness; the child tried to make up his father, and get into his good books. But his father had been rather hard on him, for some time and maintained a rather gauche attitude.

I put the boy on the road to the cleanliness and clean habits by making him slowly and steadily understand the importance of clean habits. Though it was very difficult to achieve, as I had to sit with the boy for at least one and a half hour daily, but patience had its reward and the results were quite satisfactory. Probably it would not have been difficult in this case keeping in view all other positive factors, but because of the lack of concentration of the boy on one thing.

After a few years, the father of the boy told me that a relapse has taken place and the boy is again wetting his bed. I suspected a physical cause, but on visiting their home I found that the outbreak of bed-wetting coincided exactly with the birth of the little sister, who had occupied her mother's attention since her

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arrival in the world. The mother had, in fact, without realizing it, shown more tenderness towards her baby girl than she could ever have shown towards her older children. As soon as Eeshan noticed it, he immediately started using all possible methods in an unconscious effort to win back his mother's attention. What could be more effective than identifying oneself in the simplest way possible with the baby, who is allowed to wet its nappies and gets admired by its mother for doing so? It was a grand opportunity for Eeshan's chidish mentality to express itself. Besides which, apart from the bed-wetting, the boy's own work suffered enromously, and apparently even his intelligence; he seemed to have come to a halt, and his apparent stupidity occassioned the most painful remarks; all progress ceased.

No doubt, today in allopathy there are excellent methods of curing bed-wetting, but I have always recommended re-establishing the control of the child's will over this particular bodily function and the same can only be done with his full consent and cooperation with a special effort on the part of the parent.

Kishen who is nine is also in the habit of wetting his bed almost daily. His parents have tried punishments and also rewards, but in vain. On seeing the child, I found him over-active. He was with his grandmother when I saw him. The

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grandmother told me that I always keep on eye on him and see that his actions and movements are restrained. The old lady told me that her daughter is a remarkable psychologist and an educationist and knows how to make use of the knowledge of psychology in improving the children's characters. When I asked her how exactly does she use the method of psychology on the child, she said, "after getting fully tired, Kishen is made to lie on arms and legs outstretched until a satisfactory muscular relaxation has been obtained". "What happens if the muscles do not relax in a few moments", I asked. She replied, "well, obviously one can't wait for ever, so he gets a good dose of beating, which has the advantage of calming him down quickly"!

I am really at a loss to understand how a child could really relax properly if and when he is given a good thrashing, if success was not achieved in a few seconds.

So far as this child is concerned, bed-wetting could be summed up, as a subsidiary manifestation of his generally restless energy; and the usual beating method for soothing the central nervous system. The grandmother along with the child wasn't made conscious of anything but she was told to tell the parents of the child to talk to me. The parents, in particular the father of the child was told about

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the reasons of the bed-wetting in the child. The child was taken out from the custody of the grandmother and sent to a boarding school with the competent staff who were most understanding. By doing so, the life of the child was made regular, calm and relaxed.

I do not look upon bed-wetting as a specific illness which needs treatment as such to the point of ceasing all positive curative action since it has disappeared as a symptom; but rather as one manifestation of a much wider disorder: a loss of mental control over actions and sensations; and this may conceivably have unconscious emotional origins.

This attitude towards bed-wetting has an immediate result. It leads one to treat such child as a whole and not merely the symptom-tiresome as that symptom is to the parent and humiliating to the child. One rarely regrets having widened one's field of study, even if some parents do express astonishment and the importance attached to such a minor disorder.

My son, Chintan at the age of even four years would wake me up during the dead of night and tell me that he has to pass urine. He would say, "fish aao, fish aao" (I want to piss). What I want to say is that he not only didn't have the problem of bed-wetting, but a conscious effort had been made by us (parents) that he was

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trained in such a way that he had developed such a control on passing of urine that he would even stand up in his sleep during night also and say that he wants to pass his urine.

Many children, who are not in the habit of bed-wetting, wet the bed immediately as and when they are woken up for passing urine, but it is always the parents who have to be understanding and intelligent enough to know the underlying cause of bed-wetting.

Whenever one is able to work with the understanding of the parents and at the same time with the confidence of the child, one not only gains the most rapid and the lasting successes with the symptom, but also with the child's general behaviour which shows a marked improvement.

Unfortunately, even today, many parents of present day and even educational authorities of today, resort to repressive measures of a fairly violent kind, from corporal punishment to privations of various sorts, often accompanied by the attempts to shame the child in the eyes of the playmates and relatives. This reduces the child to the state of a hunted animal, which does not provide him with any means to cure himself.

Many a time such children have felt desperate about their nightly accidents and long to cure

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themselves but can't. Many children keep themselves awake in an attempt to prevent the thing, but towards morning they succumb to physical fatigue and bed-wetting takes place. Is it right to punish them for something they are not really responsible for? I have always thought that instead of finding faults and putting them to shame, we should give them enough and efficient weapons to fight their battle.

You may be astonished to know that not only older children but adolescents are also victims of bed-wetting. Many a time, young bed-wetters have told me that they in their dreams have felt that their bladders are full of urine and they find out a place where they relieve themselves freely, and wake up when the deed is done. I have seen parents of this type of children waking them up to empty their bladders, but unfortunately they either find the half waking child urinating on the bed or they have to somehow held them up to get the desired effect.

A girl of fifteen who happened to be the daughter of a friend of mine told me that her bed-wetting occurred on the days when her brothers and cousins who were living together with her would relate the stories of ghosts (Jins) because these stories would frighten her. She would imagine the ghosts (Jins) like huge human beings with strange figures who always would be ready to create a fear in the real small

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human beings like her. Her brothers and cousins having found the weak spot about which she was really sensitive, never missed the opportunity of frightening the life out of her, without her parents having an idea of what was going on.

When she was made to understand the real background of what was going on in her mind and thereafter educated that she could be stronger than her brothers if she takes conscious and active steps to rid herself of the sensitivity about a concept, which could no longer really mean anything to her, and which was a re-personification of the fears she had so often experienced in her childhood; very good results were obtained. After a year or so, the girl on my visit to their home told me that she had not only lost all fear of the devil, but of the dark also. She was able to walk to the farthest corner of their kitchen garden at night, without being terrified of all the ghosts she used to see. Her brothers had stopped persecuting her and the unfortunate incidents had ceased at once.

I would also like to make a mention of the son of a cousin of mine Shibhan by name, when he was eight and suffered for a long time from bed-wetting. For some time he was well, and then suddenly for no reason his bed-wetting started again. After probing, it was found that his elder brother had told him to keep a secret. They had gone to see the movie, "Dracula" which

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was most terrifying for them. I had always found that the elder boy was jealous of his younger brother and liked using terror to keep him under his thumb; for instance, many a time during night he would go into the room of his younger brother and pull faces at him. Sometimes, he would light up his face with red and green lights to frighten him. The accumulation of elements of fear like this, coupled with the need to hide something - which was quite contrary to his nature had given him a terror complex which showed itself in the form of bed-wetting.

When the hidden reasons behind his bed-wetting came to surface and his elder brother was made to understand that he should not repeat his actions and whenever they have to go to movie of whatever the sort, the same should be known to the parents or elders in the family, the bed-wetting began to disappear. The parents also helped in the way that by having the wisdom not to follow up the discovery with a punishment.

I would also like to make a mentioned of another case which can be an eye-opener for the parents. When I was working as a Lecturer in J&K state, a colleague of mine many a time made a mention that his son suffers from bed-wetting and he is terribly worried on this account. He wanted that I should see his child. One day he got his child along with him to the

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college. I could find the child a normal human being of normal intelligence with the only problem that whenever the child was touched, he would get a jerk as if he expected a slap instead of a touch of love. He would move here and here in such a way as if he was surrounded by hounds and not human beings. I only observed the child and did not tell anything to the child or his father, but showed a desire of visiting his home.

One Sunday, early in the morning, I landed at his residence in Tullamulla, Kashmir, after visiting the Kheer-Bhawani Shrine of Tullamulla. While we were talking, the son of my colleague came in and sat in front of us.

On seeing the child coming in the room, I smiled and said, "good morning, son". He recognised me and reciprocated with a smile though forced, and began to sit along with us in the room, but his father told him to go away saying, "while elders are talking, children should not sit and listen to what they are talking". I made the child to sit and told my colleague to allow him to do so as I wanted to talk to him also and I tried to enter into a conversation with the child. While I was talking to the child, the wife of my colleague came in with a cane in her hand and without looking here and there began to cry out at the pitch of her voice and beat the child. He came in my lap to save himself but the mother did not

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budge an inch. She continued beating him even if I tried to stop her. When I asked about the reasons of beating the child, she said, "he has broken a cup; and who are you to ask about the reason of beating the child. I am not beating you or your child. I am beating my son". Thereafter she looked to her husband in such a way as if she wanted to eat him raw. The husband instead of making his authority feel by one way or the other way kept mum and felt terribly ashamed in my presence. The mother on the other hand dragged the child out beating him with her hands and saying that in the evening she will make his tutor beat him with his belt.

Everything became clear in an hour. The mother of the child was his stepmother and the husband was totally under the control of his wife. Not only that, I could also feel that the husband was often getting a beating at the hands of his wife. I immediately left and returned to Srinagar though my colleague insisted that I should stay. However, next day when we met at the college, I made my colleague aware of the reasons of bed-wetting in his child. He was told to resume the child immediately from the custody of the mother which he did and sent him to a boarding school at Mansbal, Kashmir. Thereafter, the bed-wetting of the child vanished after three months. He (my colleague) was told to exercise his authority slowly and in an organised manner for which he had to be given a lesson daily. Today,

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the child is a doctor and the whole family is living happily.

So, I believe that bed-wetting should be looked upon more as a symptom than an illness in itself. Bed-wetting also deserves close attention on its own merits, yet one should not only try to cure the symptom but also to correct any deviations in the child's conscious or subconscious mind which may be associated with it.

This question is linked too with the much wider problem of training in clean habits, a problem whose importance is not sufficiently realised. After a first period when the infant is allowed to satisfy his physiological functions without hindrance and how he pleases, there comes a second period when "habit training" begins: the first concern is regulation of the bowels, because dirty napkins are most tiresome; urination should be attended second.

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9

LACK OF CONFIDENCE AND INFERIORITY COMPLEX IN CHILDREN

Children are extremely susceptible to suggestion; every care has to be taken in all the remarks which are flung at them every day. I was hardly six years old. One Sunday we had a number of guests at home. After having lunch along with all the members of the family and the guests; as usual I was told to help my mother carry the things into the kitchen. I grabbed a few glass tumblers taking all the necessary care but as soon as my doing so caught sight of my father, he began to beg not to entrust me with such a delicate job of taking the glass tumblers to the kitchen. My mother shouted, "put down the glass tumblers, or you will break them". Sure enough, exactly after three seconds the

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tumblers broke.

Children, no doubt, can be made to do things requiring great skill on condition that they give you their whole attention and also you prepare them for what they have to do by a preliminary suggestion; you should also tell them that you would never give them such a tricky or difficult thing to do, if you were not sure that they would come out with flying colours. The child feels delighted by the trust which is placed in him and puts all his energies to complete the task and succeeds in doing really astonishing things of which sometimes you really never believed him capable.

Many parents and educationists are of the opinion that such a procedure might risk making children vain and too self-assured. But, I feel what advantage is there in the child lacking self-confidence? I have a strong notion that this way we are denying the children one of the greatest aids to development and condemn them to dullness and apathy. Children need genuine compliments, they need some acknowledgement of the progress they are making.

Many parents keep on telling their children that they are incapable, stupid, ignorant, idle, indisciplined and good for nothing and mostly these children sometimes prove to be the same

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even if they are the most capable children. Teachers are also to be blamed for the same. I know many children who are called idiots by their teachers without any reason or explanation, and they, i.e. children under the circumstances feel that they can never make a success of anything.

The study of failures in examinations often is also a result of lack of confidence in children. I feel that throughout their period of study, confidence should be instilled in the students which also has an added advantage of ensuring them a quiet mind and leads them towards a knowledge of how to use the ideas at the right moment. I have seen children whose lack of confidence has reached very serious proportions and the same has deprived them of all the zest in life and has left them defenceless before the world which is too difficult for them and towards which they have developed an attitude of hostility.

Apart from shortcomings in education, lack of confidence has sometimes physiological or pathological origins. A child who makes blunders in school or who is physically weak needs attention and care; vice versa, lack of self confidence can affect physical health. I know of a brave young man who had fallen mentally sick through a series of emotional shocks, that he had given up all hope of becoming normal or leading a normal life. He had begun to look upon

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death as the only solution to all his problems. He had no physical trouble but was harbouring some in his mind. When he was re-assured that he has no physical trouble and a confidence was created in him that he is more intelligent and hard working than many other students of his age which was a reality also; it was observed that within a month, he took such a turn for the better as could never have been hoped. Today, he is an efficient and a highly respected class I officer in a government of India office.

The inferiority complex gives a child a particular stamp of which I have noted a number of cases. Very often, this condition is merely seen from the physical appearance of the child; his gaze is unsteady, he lacks precision in his movements, which are hesitant and clumsy, his attitude is awkward, unassured expression on his face. It is often noticed that the children of this sort are failures in physical activities also, games in particular, because they do not believe themselves capable of doing the same. In the intellectual spheres, these children are distinguished by often changing of their ideas, the incoherent way of telling things, and their hesitancy in having an opinion an anything. Repetition of words and inability to finish sentences is often found in their spoken word.

Many people unfortunately continue to crush their children and do not have any concept of

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the disaster which an inferiority complex can bring to surface. Scolding the children can even sometimes shake the child out of his apathy and an incontestable result can be got. The parent or the teacher feels happy and also feels that by scolding and shaking, he has been able to make his child obey him and work according to his instructions. No doubt, the immediate result is encouraging, but it has a deterious effect on the personality of the child.

I know a friend of mine who at the age of launching out on a career kept drawing back from it because he was terrified of the scenes at home which would be created every time he faulted over something. His father was driving him forward with great strokes of words and hands while he always kept himself back. Unfortunately, the mistake had been made long too before and it was too late to do anything about it. I have a feeling that punishing and scolding are exceptional methods for which, it is essential to know how to use. Their value is inversely proportional to the number of times they are used. The less their use, the more efficacious they will be. Inferiority complex is nourished when comparison is made between the talents and qualities of one child to those of his brother or sister or any other child of his age. If parents do not take care of this aspect, the children not only develop jealousies but also chronic inferiority complex.

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In a joint family where we find many boys and girls together, a girl or all the girls may develop a feeling of inferiority towards their brothers; but this will develop only when an attitude of pity is adopted towards the weaker sex. If the girl is weaker than a boy, she must be encouraged and told very clearly that she is no way different from her brother in intelligence, his capacities and capabilities to undertake challenges and also work hard. In addition to that, she should be told that being a female she has many qualities of feminine nature which she should learn to make use of. A child having any physical infirmity and prevented from leading the normal physical life can also develop an inferiority complex. He also has to be provided with a compensation of some form.

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10

ELEMENT OF RIDICULE

Each child expresses different emotions. These emotions have a vital role to play in the life of every person. The natural qualities of a person can be judged by his emotions. The young child's emotional expressions are unbridled, whether they be expressions of happiness and joy or some unpleasant emotions such as anger, worry, jealousy etc. This is because, to a child every thing centres around himself.

From my childhood, I felt always interested in expressing my thoughs in writing small pieces of poetry and short stories. My father never liked the same. A time soon came in my childhood when my short stories and poems began to get published. Also, I participated in various

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programmes of All India Radio. My short stories and plays were accepted by All India Radio for adaptation and production respectively. It was then and then alone that my father began to recognise my talent.

At Srinagar, in mohalla Syed Ali Akbar, where I spent my childhood and youth, I had many cousins, male and female, who formed a group which had sufficient number of artistes to enact a play. We had two big courtyards, and even the ground floors of our houses had large enough rooms to present a play. Inviting other children of the neighbourhood to witness the same on a nominal charge was a regular feature at Mujoo Mohalla (Mujoo - The name given to Mujoo dynasty to which we belonged).

Everything was very easy for us those days. Anybody amongst us would get an idea and the same would be given a shape. We did not write the scripts of the plays always, but we often sketched them out in our minds, rehearsed again and again and then would finally perform in the big courtyard or the rooms of our houses. Unfortunately, my father or the parents of my other cousins were never happy with whatever we did. During rehearsals or even sometimes when the performance of the play would be in progress, father of any of the performers would come and say, "my son likes to play the roughian!". Another parent would say "o, my son

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feels that he likes to be a surgeon!" The boy performer would at once stop to guard his illusion from the intrusion of reality. He would stop at once and when his father would laugh at him and say "what do you think, you can become a surgeon in your life? Never possible; you don't open your text books for reading even for an hour and you are thinking of becoming so and so". What happened after that was that the boys were never able to perform nicely.

Never make a fun of child's play. Never try to kill the so called undesirable form of activity by the use of ridicule. Probably you may succeed in stopping something that you think is dangerous, but you may kill something besides an undesirable game. Ridicule and fear of the same make the child secretive. A child dreads nothing more than being laughed at, being made fun of. And, if a boy while performing as a surgeon lives intensely as surgeon in his imaginary role, he will do almost anything to prevent his elders or parents from knowing what he is doing especially when they feel that the boy does not pay any attention to his text books.

In this era of satellite invasion and availability of ready-made entertainment, how do you expect the child to develop his creative talents? How is it possible for the child to develop understanding and appreciation for the performing arts, if he is exposed to all the art in

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the form of television soaps?

The child should be allowed to perform the way I would do it or the way he or she likes to do so. Parents should encourage these small performances and learn not to ridicule the performer, if he or she is not able to perform nicely. Not only this, the parents should even take an initiative in creating a little actors club. The little actors of the club can meet on sundays along with some parents who will help them in selecting a small play, conduct readings of the play, take children through the basics of acting and self expression to the actual stage of the play. I, as a professional communicator for the last more than 20 years in electronic media guarantee that when the child is taught how to communicate effectively in a performing media like theatre, there is always an off shoot in his or her powers of self confidence. Children can overcome many fears by simply acting out their differences - they learn to develop their rationalising powers. More importantly, having been on the stage themselves, children learn to differentiate between life and reality, from the fictional fantasies being unfolded on television incessantly.

The parent has an important role to play. He or she must recognise the importance of emotions and emotional expressions in the child in this era of satellite channel invasion.

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The parents should be conscious of the fact that emotion is a potent motivating force and emotional energy can be directed to useful channels by giving required positive signals and not the wrong negative signals for the benefit of the child.

In other words, it can be said that emotional expressions of children can be channelised if proper direction and guidance is given to them.

The parents have to find out ways and means to get rid of child's pent up energy by deciding and organsing the ways in which the child is engrossed and gets rid of his pent up emotional energy. One such effective way is to launch a drama, because children these days remain glued to television for a measurable time of the day and when they are asked to perform themselves, they take great interest for the same.

Older people represent reality, the dullness of everyday life. Once again speaking on child performers as said in the above lines, the older people know that the boy is not a surgeon. The boy also knows that he is not one, but he wants to forget for the moment and if his role is shattered for that moment by the intrusion of his father, it becomes unbearable for him.

In a child's life there is a large field which no

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older person should venture to enter wrongly to force one's way into it in an unacceptable way. The same can prove detrimental in the development of wholesome personality of the child. If you sometimes feel that something is going wrong somewhere, don't mention it, unless you think that it is really something which has to be stopped. Always use a better and a safer way to stop a certain thing than to ridicule your child.

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11

FALLING PREY TO LIES

Lies are of two types; the excuse - lie and the black lie.

If we cast our minds back to our childhood, we can remember certain type of lies of the excuse type. These also are of two types: those that succeeded and those which did not. The ones which succeeded left us with mixed feelings of satisfaction and remorse. Satisfaction, because we proved ourselves to be cleverer than adults. Remorse, because we were frightened that the falsehood will be found sooner or later, and partly also because it left us with an uncomfortable feeling that we did not play straight.

Every child is many a time tempted to deny and

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if his first lie is successful, he tries to have another try. Also, many children put up the most amazing resistance to questioning by adults and hang on to their falsehoods with great obstinacy. This is often due to the fact that the punishment which followed the discovery of a lie is too harsh.

The excuse lie sometimes has two aims. 1. the speaker excuses himself and at the same time 2. Puts blame on some other child or person. This is called as the excuse-accuse lie and represents a refinement which is far more censurable. It needs to be brought to light without fail and very severely corrected. When a child concocts a lie of this sort, it is essential to get to the bottom of the reasons behind his attempt to malign some particular person. This may provide a precious clue to the character tendency which is predominant at present.

An imaginative lie, which occurs very frequently in a child's mind also needs a careful consideration. The sense of reality, particularly that of very young children is not sufficiently developed. The boundary between the world of reality-the outside world, in its actual and objective state - and his imagination is vague and ill-defined to the child. The arrangement of real things in his imagination is in his dreams. He projects his own desires, superimposes them on reality and with elements taken from reality, builds a story which corresponds to his deepest

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desires. When we dream we are not bothered by incoherences and the child is unconcerned with them when he projects imaginary thoughts which lead him to lie. He is not halted by contradictions and impossibilities or by any other things which shock the adult's sense of reason. A child shows this in the way he describes things. He sees them larger or smaller than life-size according to how he feels. Such distortion cannot be treated as lying and whether the parent likes it or not, is must to be looked upon as an example of the child's failure to be able to accept reality as it is and to impose that acceptance on his mind.

The imaginative lie has no conscious purpose. It is not invented to obtain anything. It deserves careful investigation for it is an important clue to the workings of the child's subconscious mind on which the parents and educationists may very profitably be enlightened.

The "inventive lie" is often of a compensatory nature. The child fabricates all sorts of things of a material or emotional order to compensate what he lacks or what he thinks he lacks. I have known many children and even adolescents attribute in this way, qualities to their father or to their mother, which they obviously did not possess and given them credit for exploits which neither of them could ever have possibly accomplished. Riches and terrific financial

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ventures are also frequent products of the child's imagination. They make him for his parent's repeated refusals to get him things which would have made him happy. The world becomes a fairy land which is obviously more pleasant to live in than the world of reality with its accompaniment of unattractive hardships. It is impossible to ascertain exactly how tight a hold lying has taken on the daily life of a mythomaniac. When after long efforts he is made to understand the false nature of his statements, he is still to be induced to accept the conception of life without them and that is not always an easy matter.

Another form of lying with children corresponds to a sort of revenge which take on an adult by whom they think they have been deceived. If you as a parent feed your child on a lie, he in turn is apt to feed you on lies.

Many a time children declare that they have seen or heard something or the other. Bear it in mind that they are right as they have heard or seen whatever they say in a dream. This happens with many adults also. Their fault lies in their inability to distinguish between dreams and hard facts. If you deny their statements hastily, they are left with a feeling of profound incomprehension - as they are quite certain that they are telling the truth.

There is however another type of lie against

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which I would like to warn parents and teachers, and the same is of completely fabricated stories which the elders tell to their children when they ask some important questions to know about various life processes.

No doubt, the child needs to cultivate his imaginative skills because they make his life fuller and provide him with escapist channels which can be of service to him, so long as he remains master of his imagination but it should be firmly imprinted on his mind that every fabulous story is just make believe and does not correspond to anything real. This should be insisted upon so that no doubts on the subject may subsist.

Many children whom I have questioned on the subject, traced the origin of their doubts about the truth of their parent's declarations to this discovery. Distillusionment destroys the child's complete trust in his parents and that is really a great pity. The same thing applies to the ridiculous stories which the parents tell to their children when they want to know about the process of birth.

Parents ought to realise the heavy burden of responsibility they carry in this respect. They should always ask these questions to themselves. 1. Are we ourselves the consistent models of sincerity? 2. Don't we lie? 3. Does not social life

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accustom us to a very great number of remarks every day which are either quite false or else slightly adorned? Some people look upon their own fables and worldly embellishments with equanimity and yet get indignant when their children deviate an inch from the strict truth.

In general one should always try to find out how far the child is consciously responsible for his lie. It would be most unjust to react in just the same way to a carefully concocted lie-and especially one designed to harm others-as to an imaginative tale caused by subconscious motives; for the later the child is no way responsible and he really needs someone to guide him towards a fuller realisation of the world of reality.

Don't feed the children on falsehood. When they learn the truth, they become bitterly disillusioned. If your child is already enveloped in a cloak of false-hood, gently and gradually lead him to a sense of reality and bring him face to face with truth.

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12

DISOBEDIENCE

Authority is often confused with authoritarianism. Roughly twenty years back when I was working as Programme Executive at Srinagar Station of All India Radio, I vividly remember one of my Station Directors, Mr. K.K. Nayyar (a known broadcaster) never speaking in a harsh tone but always in a quiet attractive voice, never pushing himself forward and always asking for things with the greatest politeness and securing from all his staff, from the highest to the lowest, strict and immediate obedience. Every staff member would take great pleasure in obeying his every order. The worst words, I ever heard him utter were addressed to a Production Assistant as; how annoying for it to have happened. The Production Assistant felt ashamed

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and never repeated the mistake. Every young broadcaster was addressed as "Shahzaday" (Prince) by him. This always made us feel very near and dear to him. Also, as Programme Executive under Mr. Bashir Butt as Station Director for a number of years at CBS, AIR, Srinagar, I feel it relevant to make a mention of his administrative acumen. It was the time when most of the Directors of AIR stations would take great pleasure in issuing memoranda and warnings to their subordinates for even very small mistakes. Not only wouldn't they hesitate in reprimanding the official / officer working under them, but they would feel that their officers will take them to be efficient officers only if they make an adverse entry in the CR's of their subordinates. Mr. Bashir Butt as Station Director was totally different from all those Directors of that time. He would call the subordinate and make him understand where he had faltered. The subordinate would feel ashamed and would never repeat the mistake. This type of attitude of some officers for the officials working under them made the subordinates respect these officers with strict and immediate obedience.

My another Station Director at the same station who is no more now, like many other people was of the opinion that authority is characterised by tragic looks, an outward appearance of firmness, puckered eyebrows, gleaming eyes, a

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long face and a thunderous voice when really everyone of us-the subordinates would feel that it is just a caricature of authority. A person with true authority needs no theatrical mask to impose his point of view on others.

It is noticeable that these people are incapable of giving any order without a harsh tone and looking as if prepared for a fight. Don't we feel in our heart of hearts that we should resist such an order even if we say, "yes". Don't we feel that it would have been preferable if such people would say or order in a calm, gentle and persuasive manner.

No doubt, most of us are prone to bursts of temperament when we give angry orders; but such scenes are bad when we are talking to children and also for ourselves because they put unnecessary strain on our nervous system. The loud voice and the rolling eyes should never be abused; in fact their use should totally be abandoned. A friend of mine, did too often, without realising, raise his voice to make a remark to his son. It was not a question of ill will; it was just a bad habit. The child one day asked his mother; why has father got such a nasty voice? Thus, it is very clear that we should not tend to shut our eyes to the attitude we adopt automatically when an order is to be given to a child. We should take a note of this and correct the habit if necessary.

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The child has a natural tendency to disobey; he does so much less to annoy his parents, than to prove to himself that he is free and has a personality of his own; so he tries to measure his strength against whatever outside resistance there is to be encountered. My son, Chintan who is now eighteen years old was proving very disobedient when he was seven years old. Whenever he was refused anything he would counter insisting violently on it with tears and wild out-bursts of temper until his wish was granted. I was really perturbed and was wondering as to what steps should be taken to make my son obedient. My son would start his day with asking me to get something for him and I would always say categorically "No" and that too authoritatively, and also of course with harsh words. One day he asked for a toy aeroplane. I, as usual refused but probably not so authoritatively as was generally done by me. He asked me thrice whether he could have his aeroplane or not and I answered "no" very coolly and calmly with neither more nor less firmness but definitely in a changed tone. To my greatest surprise, I could find that the child was least insistent and gave in easily which ordinarily he would never do. Clearly there was some difference in my earlier replies and the present reply, and the same had been perceived by the child, showing thereby that right words when used in the right manner give the right results. We are bad hands at acting but if we are

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definitely able to act nicely we can succeed not only in doing the most astonishing things ourselves but also in galvanising other people into action and imposing our point of view and our determination in their sub-conscious mind.

Many parents are in the habit of multiplying the orders they give to their children. Go and do this; hold yourself properly; don't pick up that; don't do this and don't do that; you must do this etc. How can a poor child be expected to obey all such orders, without instinctively shutting his ears to most of the constant flow of instructions. When you feel that orders have to be obeyed by the children, then the same should be given only when necessary, in a clear and precise manner; their execution also must be strictly enforced, on the understanding that disobedience is something, which is totally inadmissible.

A parent may be obliged to keep a firm hand on a child because he tends to be very naughty; if so, the parent should remember that the child also needs some moments of relaxation; he should at certain times be left completely free.

The absolute authority which many parents often exercise over the child during the first years of life should gradually change to an atmosphere of advice, support and control. Though things have been dealt in detail in second part of this book, but here I would like to say that the

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outside will of the parents should be replaced by the child's will and the child should be provided with reasonable guiding influence in life.

A worrying authoritarian attitude on the part of parents is due to lack of confidence in the capabilities of their children; no independence is granted, hence no progress can be made. Unfortunately, many parents make their authority an affair of principle. The child accept the same as a matter of principle for sometime, but a time comes when the same is questioned by the child. The gradual loosening of parental control on one hand and teaching the children to look after themselves on the other hand wards off the revolt to a considerable degree.

Conflicts between parents and children blight the atmosphere in many a home. In many a home unbearable tension grows up between the parents and children which results in perpetual clashes of authority. In such homes, to develop a cool atmosphere in the family; it sometimes becomes necessary to isolate the child from his parents for a time to be put in the care of some relative or a well wisher who is not harsher or more authoritarian.

The extra authoritarian parents should know that when they refuse a child something; instead of refusing they should ponder for a few seconds, whether it was really essential to refuse. Most

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of the parents will find that they are naturally inclined to oppose the wishes of their children. There are many things which the child could be allowed to do but are instinctively forbidden because the same were forbidden to us when we were small. I am personally painfully aware of the great effort it was for me to allow my children certain liberties which I would never have dared to claim for myself from my parents at their age. On giving these concessions to my children, I realised that these concessions were not harmless, but contributed to the educational development of the children.

Too much of authoritarian behaviour can even crush the child's vitality. Some children who find the struggle uneven may retire into a generally apathetic attitude or escape into dreams which take them away from reality. Their parents sometimes feel conquerors because there is no more opposition. Such children when faced with looking after themselves independently will behave hesitantly and incompetently and will often find themselves leading for complete failure. Even there are parents who order their eighteen and twenty year children like eight and ten years olds. This shows how badly they are preparing their children for life's responsibilities and how difficult it will be for them to catch up on all the areas of training of life at later years. Every parent should notice this well in time and realise that the best course is not to be

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obstinate and hold to an obsolute authority, but to adopt gradually an attitude which creates greater confidence in their children.

I have met many parents, who have been brought up severely themselves. They feel that there is no reason that why their children should not be brought up as they have been brought up. It is better if they think it over a little and change their mind.

In many families there are children who are chronic disobedients. It generally happens when the father and mother in the family are not in complete agreement with each other and also when there are frequent emotional scenes between the parents. The children in such families get mixed up in a game of balance of power, trying to find the happy medium of their parent's ideas. But, they always end up choosing that they like best and escape all real authority. The same thing also happens when we have a grandmother in the family. In such family one of the two things may happen. Either the grandmother will spoil her grandson or granddaughter by being very lenient towards them and finding fault with every action of her son or daughter-in-law or by being very harsh towards their children. In these circumstances the children also find an opportunity to bid farewell to the authority. It is hard to obey a person when the authority of that person has

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been called in question by his own mother.

No parent should start by saying 'no' but if saying 'no' is necessary, then the same should be said keeping in view the need and situation, and the decision should not be reversed even if the child insists. This is a bad plan of action. A good way is to take the child in confidence by asking him what he would do if he was in your shoes. Children are basically honest and they often give a reasonable reply. They will thus be much readier to carry out their parent's wishes and at the same time they receive training for future life. Children give perfect obedience to a leader whom they respect whole heartedly; and to be a good leader for at least our own children is in the hands of every one of us.

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13

SADISTIC AND MASOCHISTIC TENDENCIES

Though actual sadism i. e. deriving of pleasure from hurting others is rarely found in children but a streak of thoughtless cruelty is markedly found in them. Boys and girls in the intermediate stage tend to exhibit a primitive behaviour in many spheres particular to that stage. Often they derive pleasure in hurting one another. Many a time they devise such games in which cruelty to lesser or a greater extent comes to surface. I along with my cousins in childhood had devised many cruel games in which painful punishments would he suggested for the loser or the child who could not play well. The loser was either supposed to carry the winner on his back from one corner of the

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compound to the other at least fifty times or accept ten lashes on his back.

Painful punishments were imagined for these so called friends and cousins turned enemies. Many a time, you may have seen a child protecting his pet, his dog, his hen, or rabbit and seldom tormenting it intentionally; the same confirms that there is no actual sadistic cruelty in children or one might say it is rarely found in them. If a boy hurts an animal, it is only because he does not realize what the animal will suffer from. In hurting one another, a sort of satisfaction is got by the children. To torment a playmate only seems to be 'fun' because the tormentor as yet does not put himself in the place of the tormented. He is too intensely occupied with his own feelings.

One of my cousins who was a little elder to me and also elder to other cousins of mine had developed a strange habit of slapping us whenever he would find us or other younger boys of the locality alone in the lane. He sometimes would deliberately wait at the main gate of his house to find out a lone passing child to slap. As soon as he would slap the child and the child would start weeping, he would feel happy and laugh heartily and run away or inside his house. I have always felt that he was doing the same for fun because after a certain period of time he forgot the habit of slapping and we heaved a

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sigh of relief.

The wantonly cruel child, who delights in killing and torturing is only pathological in so far as he derives immense pleasure by inflicting pain on others. Nevertheless, the little sadist is a revolting animal. The other side of it is that some children derive pleasure and a satisfaction when they suffer somehow or the other. We had some children in our class who would feel pleased and happy when teacher would beat them by a stick or even when their friends would tease them or inflict some injuries on them. To like to have another child push them, abuse them, roll them in sand or mud would mean pleasure for them.

I also have a faint recollection of such an experience. In Central High School, Fateh Kadal, Srinagar (J&K) where I studied for most of my childhood and which was also at a stone's throw from my home; to reach the school, I had to pass through a narrow lane. One boy who was slightly older than me would often be at the entrance of this lane with a cane or a blade in his hand. This boy's amusement was to beat the boys who passed through this lane with the cane or to inflict a small injury on the leg of his victim by the blade which he possessed. I had developed morbid dread of that boy and would shake with terror whenever I would see him. I had no courage to tell my father or my teacher who probably would have settled the matter in

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my favour; instead to the great displeasure of my teacher, I prevailed upon my father to change my school. I, on my insistence was then sent to S. P. Higher Secondary School, Kothi Bagh, Srinagar, after passing my middle standard examination from Central High School, Fateh Kadal, and the same was roughly three kilometres away from my home and I preferred to foot the distance daily.

I am of the opinion that many parents will get astonished if they know what is going on in the minds of their children. A sadistic or sexually premature child can influence a group of children and become a leader down the roads of inexperience along which the others also would never wander alone to create unnecessary havoc with the time and circumstances.

Many parents come to know of it after the damage is done, because most of the children don't tell or make aware the parents about the happenings. On 15th of March, 1999, a juvenile murder took place at Kanpur and the same was committed by two four years old boys. They battered to death a three years old friend, Parveena, then stabbed her and dumped her body in a nearby nullah. A slightly older cousin of one of the killer kids had witnessed the killing.

When the duo was questioned by the Police at

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the Chief Medical Officer's office, they behaved like any other kid of their age. Chocolates were provided to them by police to extract information and the two frolicked around perfectly normally, unaware of the enormity of the deed, as they answered the questions at the Maharajpur Police Station of Kanpur.

The two young killers recounted to the police how they committed the murder: "near a bush, my friend pushed Parveena to the ground. She bit my leg and his hand. This enraged us". As they tell it, Parveena was thereafter slapped and pushed to the ground again. The two then hit her in the face with bricks and stones. One of them rushed to his home to bring a kitchen knife. After knifing the inert brick-battered body of Parveena, they dragged the dying girl towards the nullah and left her there.

After this, they returned to their home, washed their blood stained hands and watched TV. Then following morning when the parents of Parveena and the neighbours raised a hue and cry and searched for Parveena, one of the boys calmly told his mother that he and his friend had left the girl in the nullah.

Very clearly the boys had not committed the crime because they wanted to do so, but after deep probing it came to surface that the violent serials and horror shows on satellite channels of

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television had inspired them. It was also found that their parents were in the habit of fighting amongst each other often and during fights they would hit each other with whatever was available in the home.

In another case, three children in the month of January, 2000 in a village of Bihar killed one of their classmates. When asked why did they do so, they said, "sometime back when a student of our school died, a holiday was declared, thus to have another holiday on account of death of a child in school; we killed him"

The vulnerability of children has given a heightened awareness of life's hazards, so to protect your child from harm is not only natural under the present circumstances but essential also.

In our country, the supervision of many a parents will go a long way in reducing the risky behaviour of the children. To be frank enough, we as children were always supervised by our parents and that was the reason that our childhood passed off peacefully without our venturing into any risky behaviour. Not only in our country, but in other countries also, it has been seen that the children who are closely supervised by their parents are less likely to engage in risky behaviour.

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In the wake of shooting spree by two high school children in the month of April, 1999 at Littleton, Colorado which sent shock waves across the world, many thinkers and researchers believe that stricter monitoring by parents is needed. The message is very clear; "parents matter".

University of Maryland researchers found that children living in Baltimore public housing projects, who felt that their parents set limits and talked with them about their concerns, were far less likely to use alcohol or have unprotected sex. Researchers surveyed 383 children, ages 9 to 15, periodically over a four-year period beginning in 1993. The children were asked a variety of questions every six months for two years and then annually in the third and fourth years about the limits their parents set.

So, dear parents and teachers, set limits for children and talk to them about their concerns. By doing so, the children are less likely to engage in risky behaviour.

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14

THE BULLYING CHILD

When I was a child, I had great respect for my parents. Today also, I have great respect for my elders. This is natural in me because I am framed so. I had a maternal uncle Mr. Vishwanath Munshi by name of whom I was mortally afraid and feared displeasing him in any way. This was not that I was the only child in the family or other relations who respected him and the parents and feared displeasing them or other elders in the family, but it was taken for granted that all children respected parents, teachers, relatives and even elders in the neighbourhood. Ironically the reverse often seems to be true today.

This probably is the outcome of Freud's

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teachings. Teachings to warn parents against strictness in raising children. Teachings making it clear to teachers and parents not to make use of too many No's and Dont's. Teachings saying that child when commanded to be quiet can put a halt on his natural impulses and the same can make him neurotic. Thus, very clearly he must not be criticized, if you want to keep him free from inferiority complex or guilt feelings. Teachings communicating that love and security are most important for child's proper development; teachings that parents must hold their own impulses in check and sacrifice themselves on the altar of "cherished child". All these teachings unfortunately gave rise to creation of child-centered society. The so called "natural" child was the outcome of these teachings and this "natural" child was permitted to explore nature in every way and also expose himself to every sort of experience.

To touch a burning candle may be a natural experience for the child so far as not touching the burning candle in future is concerned, but crawling to the kitchen and reaching up to turn the gas cylinder on would be dangerous and to permit such impulses to flourish can be detrimental to the family.

I, as a parent feel that such an action on the part of the child should be clamped down and never encouraged to pave way for many other

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dangerous actions on the part of the child. I am of the opinion that for a child to grow up successfully, we should permit him to develop slowly with putting on curbs wherever necessary. A child needs a clear cut direction on the part of a teacher or a parent to make him grow ably.

Many parents provide privileges to their children which they really don't deserve and it is these privileges which make them failures in life. The child who seeks privileges at home and is bestowed with the same expects such privileges when he goes out of his home.

I have seen many of my friends and very near relatives reluctant to say "No" to their children because they feel that they want to give their children all the things and privileges they never had. I am not against providing children with things, which are really important, and the privileges that are necessary, but definitely I am against providing them with things and privileges which they want because they simply want them without any rhyme or reason. I serve a note of caution to all such parents who indulge in such pursuits. Imagining that by giving a child everything he wants, the parent is giving him his love, is totally a false notion.

There is nothing wrong in giving children some of the material pleasures in life. As parents, we should be glad to give when we can and what

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the child really needs, but material things have never been nor will these ever be a substitute for parent's attention and interest.

If a parent is of the opinion that by pampering a child he is giving him his love, then I am sorry to say that these parents are under a false notion. To pamper is not to give love. Love in its best sense is to give a child constructive independence.

By over indulging a child, we teach him to take, rather than create satisfaction for himself. None of us is able to get anything free from society; we pay and we get. If a child learns this fact of life earlier, then surely all our children will grow to become good citizens of the world. If the conditions of survival in a home are substantially the same as in the outside world, then the child will naturally move towards adulthood without feeling any shock, when he comes to discover what is expected of him outside his home.

A cousin of mine who is roughly of my age; as a child would always in the first instance hesitate to accept anything offered to him by his parents. He was in the habit of accepting the same after his parents and also grandparents would coax him, request him for its acceptance repeatedly and even sometimes after getting scoldings from him. On the other hand when

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my mother would give anything to me and if I would try to copy my cousin out of curiosity or to see the outcome of reluctance and hesitation, I would always find myself in a confusion because my mother would always say, "okay, it seems that you don't need it. Keep it there or return the same to me". She would not utter a single word for its acceptance and her such approach always made me to lift it from the place and use it according to my needs.

Almost all the literate parents today are afraid of exercising their authority and give elaborate reasons for the same. When I asked a friend of mine for not exercising his authority in disciplining his child, his reply was "you see, kids today are usually shrewd enough to know how to be-fool the parents". Very funny and really an unassimilative reply. Under normal conditions of the health of the child, if the child does not want to drink milk, there is no need to bribe him for doing so. He will definitely have his milk after sometime when hungry and also even without pestering him to have the same or bribing him for having the same. I can easily go upto the extent of saying that parents today are afraid of exercising their authority. They often resort to bribery to get a child to do what he should be told to do under ordinary circumstances. Once a child gets the taste of bribe, he surely and quickly learns to protest, object and express anger whenever he is

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expected to behave.

He knows that his weak willed parent will surrender and offer a bribe. This habit of bribe makes the child to grow up with a narrow and selfish view- point, always making him to express whenever anything is offered to him: "what is in it for me?" Bribing a child habitually makes the child a slave to his desires. He remains motivated, not by the parents and his growing sense of proportion about right and wrong but by the impersonal material things he is promised. He also is not able to grow up emotionally and learn how to modify, postpone and also compromise his desires.

Remember, your children understand you better. They are very quick to exploit your weaknesses and inconsistencies. When you have resorted to bribery you have admitted your inability to control your child.

Some situations don't require explanations; they just require a firm order. Instead of making a child to heed what you say, you as a parent should not always try to reason everything out with your child because this way you will be teaching your child to retaliate with words whenever he is asked to do anything.

Fear of losing affection of children makes a parent afraid of reprimanding a child whenever

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they do anything wrong. It is certainly better to reprimand an adolescent girl on finding her out with a boyfriend in odd circumstances and odd places. Under these circumstances there is no need to be fearful in not allowing her to meet him again.

Not only have I seen some parents afraid of their children but also anxious about what others think of them as a parent. Children are aware of this also and play on these fears of their parents and get what they want. One day a friend of my cousin told my cousin's wife that her child bikes on the highway and the same should not be allowed keeping in view the traffic on the highway. My cousin's wife on telling the same to her son got the reply in a very harsh tone and angry mood. "But mummy every boy of the neighbourhood is allowed to bike on the highway! why shouldn't I be allowed?" The mummy who is of the kind of what neighbours think about me and my child got her opposition to cycling on highway crumbled within seconds. Such parents are afraid to seem unreasonable. They also fear that unless they do not let their children to perform feats, however small, they will be made to feel social outcasts. The safety and health of the child is of foremost importance and should be given top priority. Biking on highway can lead to tragic accidents. Even if everybody else is doing it; that does not necessarily mean that as a parent you should

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not be firm to point out the hazards to the child and say clear cut - No.

Many parents have been seen to permit their own rights to be invaded and trampled upon rather than risk taking a firm stand when they are found to feel afraid to exercise their authority for fear of driving their children to an open rebellion. They actually hesitate in dealing the situation or are afraid of the "scenes" created by the child who tries to dramatise certain situations like throwing himself on the road, shouting in presence of a number of people or even creating a scene of weeping bitterly. This happens because of no confidence of parents in their own authority as they have rarely used it. Parents who pamper their children are very rarely respected by their children and they sadly wonder why their children don't respect them. Such parents are also treated as inferior by their children probably because of not being firm with them. Discipline, under the contemporary social milieu is the only punishment in my opinion. Rearing a child with discipline means teaching him to live usefully and happily with others and himself. He is trained to get along well in the world.

Discipline and love should be two important words in the mind of every parent so far as planned development of children is concerned. The child who feels loved not

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foolishly pampered-will always accept discipline. He will feel reassured by sensing strength and instruction in his parents as well as true affection.

Parents who do everything for their children rob them of the training which they need to become independent and self sufficient. Sooner or later a child has to do everything for himself. The earlier he is disciplined - the sooner he will acquire self-discipline.

Children respect parents who respect themselves. When the child is treated with loving discipline, the child responds with loving esteem. Discipline is true love which you should show to your child. The real devotion of the parent towards his child lies in saying "No" because of far reaching and long-lasting benefits than saying "Yes" just for the sake of momentary pleasure of the child.

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FALLING PREY TO THEFTS

Children who steal can be divided into two types. Some children are in the habit of stealing regularly while others steal on exceptional occasions.

Certain things like pieces of Jewellery, geometrical instruments, pens and pencils and the like are stolen by the children. The idea behind all this is that they want to add to their personal property. The attitude of society towards stealing does not enter their mind or they understand it but imperfectly. They definitely understand it when the object is snatched away from the child or when the child is beaten. Some children, when they are told that stealing is not a good practice and is blameworthy; they stop

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the practice; while with others only telling is not enough. In the minds of such children, the menace of police, prisons which are used to threaten the adults have to be created. Sometimes it may prove counter-productive. The child instead of stealing in a normal manner will now begin to steal in a way so as to avoid getting found out.

Upto the age of five or six years of the child, usually no body should bother about the petty pilfering but above this age the conscience of the child must be sufficiently developed to avoid temptation of any sort.

In the year 1990, a lady who had migrated from the Kashmir Valley after the killing of her husband by militants; one day came to Radio Kashmir, Jammu, where I was posted at that time. Her son who was aged roughly eight and was also along with her- a pale bony human being, roaming here and there in the room with prominent instability and having an examination of everything in the room. I could feel that he had fallen a victim to stealing because he tried to steal one or two things (not so valuable) which were on my table, but my presence and the presence of other persons in the room prevented him from doing so. As soon as I witnessed the behaviour of the child, I felt interested in him and began to probe into his personality. The lady who was well educated was

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booked by me for science programme for which she had come to the Radio Station. I drew her attention to the behaviour of the child. On this, she somehow allowed me to know about herself and the child. Also, she wanted a remedy for such behaviour of her child.

The lady had come to Jammu along with her mother-in-law and other three children. After the killing of her husband, she had felt quite incapable of looking after her mother-in-law and the children. Deprived of his beloved father, the child who was the only male child had turned himself entirely on his mother. The mother totally shattered by the killing of her husband and a weak personality to take command of the situation, let herself be dominated by the possessive instinct of her son, who demanded a lot of attention and particularly a great deal of affection, which she did not feel that she was able to give. Due to this, the child was emotionally repressed. The grandmother of the child on the other hand disapproved of the ways the child is being treated and brought up. She would always exert pressure on the child and tried to make him polite, well mannered and independent of his mother. The result was that the child was torn between two sources of authority: the strong unemotional influence of his grandmother and the weak inconsistent attitude of his mother. The same had resulted in his great unhappiness and his unbearable

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behaviour and becoming a nuisance for himself and the others. When his mother went away from home, his thefts started and coincided with a recrudescence of emotional repression. The thefts brought him severe punishments, because they had no formative character and lacked the indispensable accompaniment of an explanation. The other factor was that the migration difficulties involved this lady and the mother-in-law in endless discussions about purchase of this and that. Many things were necessarily not purchased, but nobody ever tried to make this child understand the reasons for the same. Whenever he would ask for something, he was labelled as an idiot who is not able to understand anything.

One day, I asked the mother to keep the child with me for sometime. I took the child along with me to Rugh Nath Bazar, which is the main and centrally located market place at Jammu. He was given a ten rupee note and was told to buy anything he wanted to buy. He moved from one show-case of one shop to the other show-case of other shop hastily. He was not able to make a decision and was in a fix what to buy and what not to buy. When he was guided towards some toys which suited his age, he bought a few of cheaper rates with continuously telling me that the others will be very costly. When we reached home, he totally lost interest in his toys which he had purchased himself. I

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could feel that his only satisfaction was momentary one i.e., to acquire something from the market by purchasing for money. He had totally no idea about how to use money and how to use the thing purchased for the money.

When the lady came to me next, she was asked to set up the home again and take the sole charge of the children. The lady who was totally shattered by the death of her husband and the subsequent migration, felt the task very difficult, but when she was told that this is very essential for the future life of the children in particular and her life in general, she accepted the challenge and put herself in reaching her goal. Today she has taken the full control of her home and the children and is running the same nicely.

Now, I will tell you about a boy of eleven, Pankaj. This boy has started stealing from very early age. The boy has an elder brother who is thirteen years old and a sister six years old who is a confirmed liar. Their father says that his elder son is very cooperative and well behaved but the younger one is chronically objectionable and hot tempered. When asked about any good point which his son may be having, he at once admitted that his younger son is intelligent and even a gifted child.

The child has persecution-mania and freely imagines his brother is better loved than he. He

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likes the company of good for nothings, but his parents throw them away from home.

On starting a conversation with the child he firstly revealed to me the hatred he has for her little sister. On asking him as to why he has hatred for her, he revealed that a few days back some biscuits missed from the kitchen and he was immediately accused; but he had not stolen the biscuits that time. He put pressure on the sister who finally owned up but he had already been reprimanded for the same. His sister often lets him to be blamed like this; he hates her for it; he often feels unjustly treated in particular where his elder brother is concerned. The elder brother also turns his sister against him.

Pankaj is in the habit of stealing articles of food from the kitchen and also money from the purse of his parents. His mother hides away all the keys, quite obviously, because of him, yet he is aware that his sister steals the same and as much as he. His habit of stealing has started at the age of four or five but when asked about the circumstances -which made him to steal, he could not remember the same.

He owns one or two things which really belong to him and have been bought by him with his own money - a desk which he is really fond of and certain things of play. He does not get pocket

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money regularly whereas the same is paid to his elder brother regularly.

When asked about his work in class, he said that he does not like study and is happy when he is ill due to which he is not able to go to school. He likes going to theatres and seeing movies but one day he has been caught at the gate of the theatre and beaten mercilessly by his father. Pankaj thinks that he is a soft target for his father and feels that the relatives are nicer to his brother than to him because he has a bad reputation and never stops annoying his sister.

Pankaj thinks that if trust is placed in him, he would like to have the keys of the kitchen and all the almirahs; he says, that would stop him feeling tempted and probably will stop him from stealing also.

We very clearly come to this conclusion that with Pankaj stealing is mainly associated with a desire for revenge on his elder brother and younger sister. The atmosphere which has been created in home needs to be drastically changed. Pankaj needs to be sent away from home, not as a punishment but as a cure. When this was revealed to his father, he could understand the same and sent Pankaj to a boarding school.

A boy who lived in our mohalla at Syed Ali Akbar, Srinagar started to steal at about the age of seven

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and who by the age of twelve years had begun to extend his activities in an alarming manner. The reason being that he was a member of a very poor and large family and he could feel that there was no alternative for him except stealing because he could not get any job easily and whole of the family members would remain hungry. After a few years, the family became self sufficient; they had enough to eat, and the stealing habit of the boy also vanished. Let us admit that even adults cannot be innocent in this respect and that the question of food plays a preponderant and tiresome part in the majority of family circles.

I like to add one word about the isolated act of stealing which may occur with any child or adolescent at a time of psychological crisis, and the same has a particular character of its own.

It is easy to see how dangerous this attitude can be for our children and how strenuously we should fight against it.

When children steal, parents should be urged not to be satisfied with repression pure and simple, but to draw even closer to their children in an attempt to discover the real significance of the deed; when speedy cures cannot be effected, it is absolutely essential not to hesitate for a moment before treatment. It is easier to treat the child from the outset and at an early stage

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but later it becomes very difficult to treat a kleptomaniac.

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EATING

Toolika, the daughter of a friend of mine was nine when I saw her - a tall and a very thin girl with big dark eyes in a drawn and tired face. When asked as to why is Toolika so thin and weak, her mother Chanchal told me that the child has kept up a systematic resistance to food for the past nine months. In spite of pleas and rebukes of every sort she refuses to eat a meal in a manner in which children of her age are supposed to eat. Many doctors have been consulted and they have found that there is organically nothing wrong with the child. Many tonics have been prescribed but of no avail.

I felt interested in knowing the details about the habit of non-eating and less-eating of Toolika.

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Apparently, nothing seemed to be wrong and the child was not ailing also. If she was thin, the same was due to not eating enough - because she did not want to eat. So, I tried to find out why and wherefrom has she got this unnatural idea.

For some days, I began to devote a few hours daily in talking to her and gaining her confidence. I told her parents not to pressurise her to take enough food and allow her to eat as much as she likes. I avoided talking to her on the subject of food and made her to talk on her friends, associations with friends and also her memories in a phased manner. Soon many facts came to surface. It will not be possible for me to describe all the facts in detail here, but as far as the refusal to eat and a desire to get thin were concerned, I could ascertain that Toolika had a little girl friend, taller and thinner than her and to whom she was very much attached. She was always praised for her elegance. Toolika, on the contrary, was plump when she was seven. At that time she felt that she was less successful than her friend. She had therefore decided to make herself look like her and had supposed that the best way of doing it was by eating as little as possible. She had suffered considerably and it had required a great deal of energy to go through with it, but she told me how triumphant she had felt when she in the mirror had seen her bones sticking out under her skin.

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Thereafter, it was only by destroying the emotional attraction which she had for her friend that Toolika was released from her neurotic attitude and she began to eat like other normal children.

Generally opposition to food in children is often less apparent. It varies from day to day but parents report that the child makes a fuss when served. Some complain that the child plays with his food and never finishes it. Lack of appetite in the real sense is rarely found in such cases but parents go to the doctors and get many therapeutic stimulants prescribed for the child. A change of air and surroundings are much more valuable and have a lasting effect. Sometimes things can be set right by not hankering after the child to take food or pestering him to eat one or the other item and also by not telling him anything and making him to starve for sometime. I have seen many children getting upset by overfeeding. Their food is too heavy and too rich. The continual resistances on the part of the child which the parents often come across is generally obstructive attitude towards adults.

The other group of children go through phases of over - eating. They eat everything and even declare themselves unsatisfied after a full meal. Real physiological needs are rarely behind the habit of over-eating, instead the child more

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often wants to compete with his elders. It is a way of drawing attention to himself. There is nothing to worry about and instead of opposing him, let him have an attack of indigestion. The parent need not intervene and waste his precious authority.

In my opinion, greediness on the part of a very small child deserves a lenient treatment as long it consists liking the right things even in higher quantities. This phase of the child passes off its own accord, if and when there is no resistance from the parents. The children should he trained gently but firmly. They should not refuse what they like less. I have trained my children to be like that. Many parents also have been trained by me to adopt such policy. Unfortunately, there are certain parents especially the mothers who do not understand the importance of training children in this direction. I know a mother of two children; a very close relative of mine who gives in every time to the desires of her children, though the father often offers resistance. In case of these children, I have seen that whenever the dish arrives on the table, they inspect it and pull a face and whenever it is served to them, they then ask to be given only a little of it or nothing at all. If they find the dish totally unacceptable they make the mother to cook fresh dish for them.

Many a time if the freshly cooked dish is not

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also of their liking, they invent a score of excuses to avoid eating it: screams, tears, yells! and even they try to go without food. But alas! the mother comes up again with something of their liking.

The habit which needs to be inculcated from earlier infancy in the child is that of making him aware that there will be no yielding. This does not mean that the parents should inflict food torture on children. Most of the children do not like two or three items of food and they should not be tortured because of that. The child should not dislike most of the items of food. What I mean to say is that he should not like only potatoes, and dislike every other vegetable.

To have food, I often sit along with my other family members with delight in pleasant atmosphere to talk a few interesting things than the food. I am of the opinion that there are many interesting things to talk about at the table than food. Many a time, my advice has been sought on the advisability of letting children talk at the meal time. I am of the opinion that the children should not be allowed to talk too much, but I do not think that it is useless and cruel to impose silence during the whole meal. If they talk too much, they eat badly and if they do not talk at all, they get bored and the family meal becomes a drudgery which is no better. Moreover, the meal time is the one real chance for parents in the

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family to be with children. In the families where both the parents go out for work, meal time is the best opportunity to be together. At this time you can converse with your children; teach them new things which are likely to be of interest to them; teach them to express themselves in a clear, precise and coherent manner. Conversations like this are only possible if a certain discipline is maintained and every one is allowed to talk. The main aim is to build up a gay and amusing atmosphere to make meal time a real pleasure for the family.

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SLEEPING

When bed time arrives, Shivam, the son of my friend finds a thousand and one excuses to postpone the moment. He, many a time goes to sleep, but after ten minutes he is back again to the bed room of his parents and says, " mummy, I forgot to ask what clothes I should put on in the morning while going to school-or something of that sort". When he is given a satisfactory reply, he goes back but after sometime comes again and the same thing is repeated by him several times. At ten-thirty or eleven the light of his room goes off and he is fast asleep, but for the parents (my friend and his wife) the evening has been wasted, that precious time when these two people who are deeply in love with each other could have

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relaxed, and talked about things outside their routine boring chores and raised themselves above the hassles of life, is lost and gone for ever.

Many a time, my friend who would get terribly annoyed, rebuked Shivam but he had to give in. Shivam's sole aim is to prevent his parents to have some time to themselves. Shivam who is the only son of the couple wants that the husband and wife should have no time to spend together and there should be no time when he should not be the centre of interest of the husband and wife; while the parents of Shivam want to have some time together without Shivam. Very clearly, when the parents in early infancy and early childhood spend their almost all the time with children, then it is quite natural that the children when they are slightly older would continuously like to be with the parents.

When I was told to solve the problem, I was very clear in telling my friend that in the infancy and early childhood, you (husband and wife) have spent almost all your time in taking care of Shivam in such a way as if after the first year of marriage you had nothing to say to each other, and attached less importance to being alone together. Now, it is only by putting a tough fight that you can find out sometime for you together.

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Parents are entitled to a little spare time on their own, quite separate from that which they devote to their children. This way the life in general becomes easier and happier for both; the children and the parents. The evening is best time for the couples to enjoy the moments of togetherness and children should not be allowed to encroach.

So, Shivam 's father and mother were advised not to sleep for about a fortnight till the time Shivam doesn't sleep. What to do? Be in separate beds, and read a book or watch television till Shivam doesn't sleep. If and when (which Shivam generally does) Shivam comes to see what you are doing and asks some questions, reply him politely, and you will find a sea change in the behaviour of Shivam. After only ten days of this exercise, the parents of Shivam have found that Shivam goes to sleep at exact 9.30 P.M. after saying good night to his parents and does not disturb them by coming again and again to their room and put every sort of questions.

I have experimented in this matter, and I have found that if you build up an atmosphere of tranquillity around your child in which he does not get disturbed by your actions and also if you are able to create a system about rest times and the discipline that goes with them, then the child will adapt himself rapidly. Whenever a parent

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tells me that his child sleeps late and sleeps little, in spite of everything she does; I outright say that she is responsible. She often does not know how to rest herself. She lacks authority and is therefore responsible. Bear this in mind that children know instinctively whether you will be uncompromising or not and they adapt their behaviour accordingly. When the child begins to grow up and his need of sleep diminishes, go and put him to bed early, if not to sleep. While sitting up in the bed, allow him to play a video game, scrabble or building things etc of plastic squares. After a certain period of time in the bed, he will put out the light and go to sleep. If two or three children sleep in the same room, allow them to talk to each other as much as they like and as long as they stay in the bed. Thereafter, when the time of sleep comes, tell them to be silent and go to sleep.

The same is true of waking up in the morning. If one child wakes up earlier than the other, it must be very clearly and strictly understood that the child who wakes up earlier has to respect the sleep of others. He should not disturb them. Sleep must be regarded something heavenly. Full relaxation is obtained by the child after a sound sleep, therefore it is essential for the parents to make an effort for a sound sleep of the child. It will be well rewarded.

Many a time I have felt that children of today

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are not often able to get the required amount of sleep because of their home work and the curricula but the fact is that our affairs are so badly arranged that such situations arise where children are prevented from sleeping in order to work. In case of many a children whose performance was bad and when they were questioned, I could find that they had been made to repeat their exercises thrice because those were done badly. When I probed deeply into this matter, I found that they had not slept for required number of hours due to which they were not able to perform well. To turn night into day and not know how to relax makes us to live in a state of perpetual tension.

The afternoon sleep is very important for children. Every child should be made to sleep in the afternoon, particularly during the hot season, immediately after lunch or having something when he returns from school. Many children resist it because they want to play after they come from school, but it should not be allowed because sleep refreshes their mind and body for extra work. Lack of sleep and rest has many bad consequences. They affect the child's mental equilibrium as well as his physical well being particularly when we talk of physically weak or backward children. Make the children sleep for better performance.

Most of the children sleep calmly during night

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but there are some children who wake up at the slightest noise. In many families I have seen that the children who wake up at the slightest noise, the family members don't talk at all or even if they talk they talk in a very low pitch. Also, they don't make noise of any sort. I have always felt that doing so is totally wrong. If the child wakes up at the least sound, allow him to wake up. You will find that after waking up slightly, he will again go to sleep. What I want to say is that get him used to noise and the same is not really difficult. Are we not used to cooler noise or are not the people living near railway lines used to railway noise.

My elder son Satyen is used to having a sound sleep from the early childhood, while my other son Chintan didn't have sound sleep and was most sensitive to noise and woke up easily. So, I decided to devote some time to get rid of this weakness in him. Every time he was due to go to sleep, I would start some sort of noise in the same room. It took roughly a fortnight to see that he is able to sleep with an appreciable amount of noise.

Many parents have asked me a very pertinent question many a time: when should the child stop sleeping in his parent's room, if he has always been accustomed to do so? My reply is that the ideal for the child is never to sleep in the parent's room, if possible and workable.

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Otherwise, as early as possible.

Many parents whose children sleep with them in their rooms tell me that they make love only when their children are fast asleep. I hope they won't mind my saying that the opinion of their child is totally different from theirs. A number of children from whom I have gathered information on the subject after questioning them have given me harrowing tales of the scenes they have witnessed. Sometimes eyes have been deliberately kept closed and ears kept open by these children, and at other times after they have made the parents feel that they are asleep, they have woken up when their parents got engaged in love-play and watched everything which was going on. A girl of 13 told me that she has seen and heard everything. She would keep her eyes tight shut for fear of being caught awake, but her ears took in every hissing sound and word and her first memories in this respect were when she was of four or five years.

The same is true if your child sleeps in the adjoining room and the door of your room is open or slightly open. Even if he may not be able to understand what is going on, but at the later years of his childhood at an impressionable age, he will conceive in his mind the visuals of what is going on in your room. If possible always find out a way of avoiding this eventuality.

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Allowing your son and daughter to sleep in the same room for many years may also produce unfortunate results. Also, unfortunate results may be caused by a father, living alone, keeping his daughter in his room for too long a time.

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18

PHYSIOLOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL BACKWARDNESS IN PUBERTY

The physical growth of the child and also indeed the mental growth is not a continuous phenomena. At a certain age, under the influence of secretions of pituitary gland; many other glands and a series of tissues in the body of the child are set working. These bring about the general physical changes which puberty involves.

In a boy, the pituitary activity having an overall influence of growth develops the testicular glands; which in turn govern the development of external genital organs and all the secondary indications of puberty; i.e., appearance of hair under the armpits and the

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pubic region; growth of hair on face and body; deepening of voice; and other physical changes of virile nature like broadening of shoulders and chest by which the adolescent looks more and more masculine in appearance; make their presence.

The changes which are governed by the internal secretions of testicles are followed by external secretions and eventually by the secretion of the testicular liquid containing spermatozoa.

In girls also the pituitary activity sets in motion the internal secretion of the ovary and very important physical changes take place. Development of breasts, development of internal and external genital organs, change in the shape of pelvic region, appearance of axillary and pubic hair and change of the body frame giving full feminine nature to the girl. The external secretion of the ovary ensues and with the discharge of the first ovum the menstrual cycle begins and puberty is complete. In girls, the whole process of puberty is usually more rapid than boys.

The physical puberty should go hand in hand with mental puberty. The psychologies of male and female differ in childhood and the same should differ in adolescence and even more in the years of maturity. It has been seen that parents give a certain amount of thought to

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physical development and if physical puberty is late and overdue they become anxious but they become quite un-concerned when there is delay in mental development. There is no point in physical evolution if mental evolution does not take place.

Recently, I had an opportunity of examining a few cases of retarded puberty. A boy of fifteen years was seen by me. He was no doubt physically well but at the time of his birth he had been very small. Though he was normal in every way but he had a body of twelve years old child and behaved mentally like that of a boy of eleven years. Purely, this is a case of retarded puberty due to retarded growth, and surely this boy after sometime will suddenly increase his height and weight which will be followed by beginning of puberty.

This type of retarded puberty is very straight and is not accompanied by any disorder, but in many cases general physical backwardness due to clearly defined physiological cause is responsible for the same.

A boy aged twelve was seen by me. His thyroid was no doubt normal but he had small testicles. His pelvic formation was very feminine and he was overall fat. There was no hair in armpits and pubic region. His general appearance and retarded testicular development indicated

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adiposity of genitals which clearly shows that it is a case of pituitary deficiency. A girl was also seen by me in the same family, aged fifteen, of normal height but excessive weight having very heavy breasts, not resumed her periods since her appearance from the age of thirteen. The retarded puberty in this case was due to retarded ovary development. When this girl was treated by doctors for securing full functioning of ovary, the girl became normal.

These are examples of arrested and retarded development, but we have to consider the psychological backwardness in puberty i.e. physical development being normal but the mentality being childish. This situation generally arises due to either the child being too emotionally attached to his pre-adolescent age and showing no courage in taking a step forward or the environment of the adolescent being such that it does not allow him to step forward.

One day, a child who happens to be a relative of mine came along with his mother to our place. As soon as the child entered my room he showed a strange behaviour. He did not sit comfortably in the chair, instead he sat on the edge facing the wall and did not see directly in the face of the person who would ask anything of him. This behaviour of the boy created an interest in me to study him. The boy did not seem to be stupid

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or un-intelligent.

I tried to invite the boy for a conversation. Every time I put a question to him, his mother instead of allowing the son to reply would snatch every opportunity of replying the questions put to her son. I was forced to tell the mother that I want replies from your son and not you, and to my intense amazement, she snatched away this opportunity also. She said "though Shibu (the name of the boy) is nineteen years old but he is perfectly innocent, he knows nothing, absolutely nothing, I tell you, and moreover he is not interested in all these questions which are being put to him". She also said that Shibu is not allowed to mix with other boys of his age unless he is in my company. We never allow him to read books other than prescribed by the school authorities.

Clearly, the mental adolescence of this boy is at zero and the same has totally been bye-passed. Many a girls who are not told about the changes which are going to take place in them during puberty and also in particular about the periods; a great emotional crisis develops in them and they sometimes feel that they are abnormal. I knew a girl to whom nobody had bothered to explain anything about puberty and sex knowledge in general; she was obsessed with the idea that she is completely abnormal. She also did not try to learn from other sources which

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denied her any chance of normal psychological evolution during adolescence. She had developed childish characteristics and always behaved as a little girl and was never able to get beyond the primitive stage of development.

The above cited cases are no doubt of exceptional nature, but often we come across minor resistances which act as a hindrance during the period of pubic evolution, with most regrettable consequences.

Instead of proceeding un-hesitantly towards adult status, and accepting the effects which physiological puberty has on mind, most of the adolescent boys and girls falter behind in the preceding stage of development and remain tied to the pre-adolescent period.

Puberty is the gateway to adult status and the same is not necessarily characterized by adult sex life. There are a series of new responsibilities to be faced and also to have different outlook to life which is appropriate to this period. The emergence of these men forces can he used to make puberty a time of magnificent regeneration. If the right use is made of puberty, it can inspire a recrudescence of the adolescent's vitality and responsiveness which is extremely conducive towards its development, completion and full realization.

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It should be clearly indicated to the adolescent that he or she has made an important step forward and is supposed to lead an adult life. Many parents often deplore this state of affairs and put the blame on the son or the daughter concerned for clutching on their childish existence. The parents should adopt such an attitude so that the young are persuaded to leave the childish behaviour and adopt the behaviour of an adult.

As is generally done by many parents; the adult life should never be painted as a thing of misgivings, as a purveyor of difficulties and unhappiness and all sorts of desires and urges which have to be violently repressed, then quite naturally the child will not feel like saying good bye to the stage. No effort will be made by the child to leave childhood behind and pass into adult stage. The child needs to be coaxed, helped and cajoled until his transformation into the other stage is complete.

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19

SLOW LEARNERS

In early years of my schooling, education was imparted to me and the like of me in a leisurely way. There was no competition and the education did not seem to be a burden. Emphasis on home work was unknown. Private tuitions were there but only a few parents could afford the same. My private tutor who would teach me at home for a period of one hour daily would get Rs.20/- monthly. We would like to play for most of the time and also move about freely. The examination system was also easier and mostly oral. The question paper was always a secret and would be necessary for middle classes and not for primary classes.

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The changing life style and competition in every sphere of life has brought changes in the education system also. It has become necessary to send children to pre-nursery, nursery and kindergarten at a very small age when they are supposed to be at home enjoying the affectionate atmosphere of the parents and families. Not only this, these children at such a tender age, are expected to perform, more than their capacity. While such children would prefer to play, move freely and recite rhymes but they are made to sit in a class room attentively and follow some rigid rules and regulations. The child has also to do some assignments neatly and cleanly and appear for monthly tests where he is expected to come out with good results. But, unfortunately in many children mental development may not be sufficient at this tender age. Some children are able to sit and listen while some children may not. Parents also do not have enough time to spare and help the child. The teacher tries to complete the syllabus without bothering to know whether the child has perceived what is said or not. The net result is that some children might become dull and may not be able to cope with the learning methods of today.

The normal children will learn and pick up what is taught but some children who are slow learners, have either difficulty in understanding what is taught or difficulty in remembering.

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These children can be viewed as slow learners. The present type of education where there is absence of communication affects these children to a large extent.

Every child has a right to be cared and developed normally, but the problem faced today in the class room is that of poor performance of many healthy and intelligent children, who for some unknown reasons encounter difficulty with school related matters and learning. Such children who have deficiencies in achieving academic success are "Learning disabled". This means a little difficulty is faced by the learners in any sphere of the learning process.

These children are not easily distinguished from others in a class room because their disability is only in a particular sphere which is non obvious otherwise, but manifest themselves in disorders of listening, thinking, reading, writing, spelling or arithmetic. The specific types of learning disabilities are dysgraphia (writing disability), dyslexia (reading disability) and dyscalculia (arithmetic disability). The associated problems, in learning disabled children, include poor concept formation, short attention span, impaired concentration, inability for abstract reasoning and making decisions. They also exhibit social and emotional problems, such as, poor relationship with peer group, poor adjustment in social and

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inter- personal situations.

Children with learning problems generally go unnoticed and uncared for and the same is due to the parent's non-understanding of the phenomena or the presence of untrained teachers in the schools. By the time these children reach middle school level, they develop very poor school attendance and ultimately may drop out of school. So, early detection of learning disabilities and proper care and treatment are therefore essential for rehabilitation at primary school level to prevent the problem. Professionally trained teachers should take keen interest in identifying these children and helping them overcome these problems to enable them to grow up into a responsible adult. These children are not able to understand well, express well or memorise well, so should be helped by the parents at home and by the teachers in the class. They need proper encouragement and guidance.

The purpose of any attempt to screen, assess or identify children with learning disabilities should not be to label or to seclude them from other children but the purpose should be to determine those who need special services.

If any child develops inferiority complex, he should be helped to overcome this complex by encouraging him to participate in all activities

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and also to mingle with other children. The main idea of helping these children will be to make them almost normal. In the class room itself, the child should be given full support and confidence.

An awareness among school professionals that such problem exists has to be created. In this connection, teacher education or training teachers or identification and education of learning disabled becomes imperative, enabling the teachers to function more effectively by adapting to the needs and resources of each child. The major focus should be to enable the teachers to develop proper insight with respect to the nature of learning disability procedures, to identify and diagnose such disabilities and providing remedial help to the learning disabled in the class room.

The parents and teachers should give the child a more secure environment. The highly disciplined life or strict methods of upbringing will only make them difficult to grow in normal adults and citizens.

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PART TWO

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THE SYSTEMATIC ROAD TO EXCELLENCE FOR THE CHILD

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1

SELECT THE RIGHT TOYS

Many parents bring toys for their children of their own choice and not of the choice of the child i.e. whenever a parent finds a beautiful new toy in the market and probably to his liking, he feels that the same will also be liked by his child and when the toy comes in the hands of the child, however attractive and alluring the same may be at first sight, turns into a junk heap within an hour or so. My father one day bought a robot for my son for roughly a thousand rupees. Toy robot as a mechanical man would automatically perform some feats which though liked by my son for sometime but within a day or two he got weary of the same and it took

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him only an hour after three days to break the arms, legs and head of the robot.

Money spent this way in a casual manner by not purchasing the toy of the choice of the child is of very little use, as he treats such toys casually as your casual purchase and makes them pieces of junk even before you could lay your hand on preserving the same.

Preservation is one of the basic instincts in human beings. This important instinct is discouraged in the child if expensive toys of no interest to child are bought. On the other hand, for example, if toy animals are purchased for the child, may be one or two in number and the child told to preserve them with an assurance that other toy animals will be presented to him tomorrow or within a few days, he will definitely preserve them and wait for the new toy animals to come. This way you can create interest in the child for collecting things and start him off on a collecting hobby. Almost all children love collecting things of their taste. In all this collecting, the subconscious mind benefits. The child instinctively realises that anything worthwhile starts in a small way and gradually increases. Imparting this kind of useful training to your son can be

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beneficial to him in future years of his life, when he has to take care of many things in life. The fun of saving up for essentials can build up a home piece by piece.

Today toy games are also available in the market. Small shapely pieces of plastic can be arranged in the shape of a house, sofa-set, table, railway compartment, bus and many other small forms found around us and dismantled again to give us back the same shapely pieces of plastic. These toy games help a child to grow in life. Innovative ideas come to the mind of the child and he becomes able to create many new shapes of things available to him in the vicinity or immediate surroundings. Toy games inculcate discipline and adjustment. Games have rules. In a group when a child plays by them, i.e. the rules, he is appreciated for the same by others in the group, and if and when be breaks the rules, he is scolded also. Sometimes he wins and sometimes he loses or has to face a defeat. In toy games he learns how to take defeat in good spirit and also then try for the victory again. Toy games can prepare a child to face life better and more confidently.

Children who are in the age group of three and eight like to play the simple games of competition. They like to collect different

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type of sets like pencil sets, building sets, button sets, coin sets, cooking sets etc. They also show interest in having replica of those possessions which their elders have i.e. if the father of a child has a small diary in his pocket, the child will also like to have one. If the father or the mother has purchased a new lunch box or the like for him or her, the child will also like to have one of the same quality and stuff.

At the age of ten to twelve years almost all the children are ready for the games an adult can play; I mean card games, word games, word building, competitive games etc. requiring skill, thought and decision. A boy likes to play an engineer, teacher, a mechanic, a pilot or a driver and a girl likes to play mother caressing a small doll in her lap as if a child, or a teacher with chalk or a pointer in her hand. Very clearly, toys and games, should give children a chance to play games as they definitely realize that it is an adult world and they should emulate the adults they like or advise.

An important thing to remember for all parents of today is that there are some soft toys and soft dolls which have become more common today or there are even some common household items like furry wrappers, air conditioners or carpets etc.

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which are not cleaned regularly and gather dust, can trigger off severe problems for the baby. These can not only cause skin allergy but also worrying respiratory complications. Babies from allergic or asthmatic families or from metro cities where all sorts of pollution are present are susceptible. Severe asthmatic attacks have been precipitated by the dust at home. In future years more children will be vulnerable and would be suffering from either allergic or respiratory problems.

When my first child was born, my parents felt more excited than me. They purchased all sorts of toys and the baby, they swathed in fur and satin. After a month, the baby developed severe rashes all over face and the body. My parents tried using some home-made remedies but the rashes persisted. Finally I took the baby to a paediatrician who recommended a total change at home. All the things which would collect dust were removed and the baby was dressed in cotton and pure wool. The rashes disappeared within a few days. What I want to say is that never buy soft toys because they have a very high tendency to collect dust and mites.

What is alarming is that the today's toys have all the ingredients to make your

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child sick-PVC (Poly Vinyl chloride) arsenic, Cadmium, lead and mercury. What's more in the absence of proper checking and testing facilities, toys made of toxic material are fast finding easy entry into households. The toys which are imported from U.S. Taiwan and China are not also put through any test.

For toy manufacturers, PVC is very cheap, easily available and has many colour options. Moreover PVC toy-makers often add softeners to make the product more flexible. When children innocently put soft toys like teethers into the mouth, they ingest these softeners which contain "phthalates". The phthalates can damage the kidney and the liver. High levels of lead cadmium and arsenic, also present in the softeners are equally dangerous too. "Even simple licking or sucking such toys is harmful".

As a media expert, I have always felt that advertising of some baby products which make a very tall claim and are somewhat tricky in presentation, brainwash the customer. Many a time, I have seen that even poor parents purchase these advertised products (soap, powder or oil) which claim to change the complexion of their baby. Most of the baby products

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claimed to be the best for babies by the advertisers are not trustworthy. Some of these specialised baby products develop serious type of allergies and are not safe for the baby.

Many a time, I have felt that small household items can be the best of the toys for the baby. A spoon and a tumbler or small toy structures of kitchen-ware which are easily available in the maket to play with can form the best of the toys for the baby. I am not also in favour of purchasing a walker for the child as the same can cause very bad accidents. Allow the child to learn walking naturally.

Finally, I would like to say that parents need not also resort to extreme cleanliness for the baby. One of our relatives would tell all the relatives who wanted to touch his baby to wash their hands with dettol as he would feel that the baby would catch an infection. If per chance any of the relatives would touch the baby without washing his or her hands with dettol, he would after the leaving of the relative wash the clothes of the baby or that part of the baby with dettol which would have been touched by the relative. This also is not needed. What is needed is that the baby should be

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brought up in a simple, clean and normal environment.

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2

LOOK FOR A GOOD NURSERY SCHOOL

In the year 1955, when I was a very small child, and probably in first primary, my father who was working in the capacity of an Inspector of Police at Pahalgam, Kashmir was transferred to Srinagar in the same capacity. Naturally my schooling at Pahalgam c-ame to an end and started afresh at Srinagar. Not to talk of good or bad schools, those days we were having very less schools. Originally hailing from S.A. Akbar, Fateh Kadal, Srinagar, I was put in a nearby government school which was generally known as Jabri School (Jabri schools were those schools in which children were got forcibly from their homes to the school because those days parents

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in general were not so serious in imparting education to their children) though a renowned school known as Tyndale Biscoe High School, Fateh Kadal commonly known as Mission School was nearby our home. I still don't undestand why my father sent me to this school when he was fully aware of a very renowned and good school nearby and also when other children of our family and mohalla were also studying in the same school. At this new school which as I said earlier was known as Jabri School or Jabri Zat, I, a happy, talkative six year old suddenly felt depressed and stopped communicating to other children and even my parents. The teachers at this school were with canes in their hands and beat the students mercilessly. None was allowed to talk. Pin drop silence was to be observed by all the students. Even movements were restricted. I always continued to be morose, withdrawn and anxious. I always felt mortally afraid of the teachers. When my parents could understand and feel the change in me, they then decided to send me to the Tyndale Biscoe High School, Srinagar where I could feel that the teachers paid a lot of attention to the students. Action oriented games were organised for all the students of the school. I could feel emotionally somewhat secure when I found all the family's children in this

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school. It was a nice comfortable school with the best of teachers of those times in the valley.

The times have totally changed now. Nursery and Pre-Nursery schools have come up all over the country with tremendous rapidity since 60's. In our times there were no nursery schools though kindergartens were attached to renowned and established schools. The transition from pre-primary to primary was slow and unhurried. Interviews and admission tests were unheard of, and since the demand for seats was small, most parents managed to send their children to schools of their choice.

Due to increase in population, the demand for seats at the pre-primary level also went on increasing, which gave rise to admission tests and interviews.

Most of the schools charge around Rs 400 per month as fee. This is in addition to admission fee, stationery fee, uniform fee, apparatus fee, bus fee, building fund and of course in certain cases donations. The student-teacher ratio is about one to 50 kids. The teachers in these schools are usually untrained which makes the proprietor to take liberties with them in paying their salaries. In some schools

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nursery teachers are paid only Rs 500 as their salary. This has given rise to desperation in parents and greed in schools. Many are of this opinion that nursery schools have become big business houses. Majority of schools are in residential areas, usually in two or three rooms. They have a few bits of furniture, some toys and books. There is a little room or no room for play and the focus in the school is on preparing the child for pre-primary admission. Very clearly, when we visit such a school, we find toddlers sitting in dingy, crammed rooms doing cursive writing or parroting the alphabets. Many schools prescribe a large number of text books. This hurry of parents, teachers and the schools in imposing class room discipline on a child gives rise to many problems and the result is a rotten beginning in which children are forced to sit and listen rather than feeling their way into the world through play and movement. And, when a child is of a different sort, as I was, when I was put in a Jabri school, then many problems crop up when he is forced to comply and the same makes him feel threatened and fearful of adults. The child even begins to hate parents, teachers and adults.

The question then is what makes for a good nursery school? If you were to go by the

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book, an ideal nursery school is one where there are no text books, no writing or for that matter no expectations of any kind from the child. Just a happy place where he is prepared for life rather than an examination, a place where he can imbibe the right values and social skills through interaction with his peer group. But rarely is it so. Many parents come to schools and say to teachers, "my child is three and a half and still he doesn't know how to write. When are you going to teach him to do so?" When the teacher begins to explain that he will be taught when he is motivated and receptive, the parent becomes worried. Due to this almost all the nursery schools seem to place a great deal of emphasis on reading, writing and numbers at the expense of extra curricular activities, such as, music, dance, games and craft work which involve a child fruitfully and instill a sense of fulfilment in him.

Unfortunately, parents see play as a waste of time and find it difficult to come to terms with the concept that learning is also play. A good nursery school is one which is like a "second home to the child". It is his first exposure to the outside world, to music, to colours, to sights and sound and it must be a happy experience. Almost all the parents should try to understand and feel delighted;

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when the child in a nursery school makes progress in communicative and social skills; when he no longer is shy with strangers and is able to develop remarkable ear for music, the parents should feel proud that nursery school should be considered as the best in which the teachers devote time and are trained to interact with young minds in interesting and innovative ways.

As a teacher, which I have been for long eight years prior to my joining the electronic media, I have always felt that by the age of three a child needs to be exposed to the world around him and there is no better way than to put him in a good nursery school, where he learns to interact with his peer group, while becoming aware of the world around him. But, remember there should be no pressure on him and he should be given no formal education before the age of four at all costs.

There is a ray of hope as during the last few years several nursery schools have dropped formal teaching curriculums and many established schools with trained knowledgeable Principals and staff do not expect children appearing for the pre-primary admission to know their alphabets and numbers. The emphasis, in fact has to be increasingly on the child's ability to

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observe, comprehend and communicate. Most parents, who are educated and interested in child's overall development are really delighted with these developments.

The government should also take a step in this direction and insist that admission to pre-primary classes for a child should be four plus of age in addition to the thinking of crass commercialisation that has crept in : not to speak of ridiculous load that is being placed on tiny shoulders.

The following points should be kept in mind by parents and teachers to find out whether the child is ready for nursery school or not?

1. The child has to be of three years of age. Many parents are eager in sending their children to nursery school prior to that age also which creates problems for the child and teacher also. Studies have very clearly shown and revealed that younger children take longer time to adjust.

2. The child should be willing to interact.

3. The child should be toilet trained so that he does not face any embarassing situations.

4. The child should be capable of physically

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managing his body movements i.e. he should be able to run and play with his peers and should not feel any difficulty in doing so.

5. The child should have sufficient command of mother tongue or any other language so that he does not feel any difficulty in communication.

6. The child should be willing and emotionally ready to adapt to a change in environment.

When, as a parent you really feel convinced that your child is ready to be sent to a nursery school, then it becomes necessary for you to see that the school has the following facilities.

1. The classrooms in the school are big and airy and there is enough space for children to run around and play. Small spaces may lead to negative and anti- social behaviour. There should also be a playground in the school.

2. There should be toys, furniture and even the toilets designed and planned for children. There is no point in having a toilet seat on which a child cannot widen his legs like an adult. The wash basins

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should be at a height which will not make the child seek adult help and make him dependable.

3. After satisfying yourself on the above two points then just talk to the principal and the teachers. Find out that they are friendly, smiling and caring people.

Later also when the child has to be shifted from the nursery school to a school of a higher standard, a parent should never forget to see for the following attributes of the school.

1. Relaxed atmosphere : Your child should enjoy being at school and only a relaxed atmosphere can ensure that. Over emphasis on academic excellence in very early years of schooling tends to take the joy out of learning.

2. Committed faculty : The teachers of the school should be available to students at all times. What should be very clear to parents and teachers is that the role of teachers should extend beyond classroom.

3. Best infrastructure : The school should have wide range of facilities which will enable the students to participate in

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activities like sports, music, theatre and computer. Best infrastructure will ensure the development of a wholesome and well - rounded personality of the child.

4. Personal attention : Classrooms with not more than 30 students each are a must to ensure that no one feels neglected. Each child needs personal attention and guidance in the formative years.

5. Opportunities for growth : The school must provide opportunities to its students to develop talent in diverse areas. The children should be exposed to distinguished visitors. Camps and workshops should be organised by the school to develop co-curricular and other activities.

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3

FIND OUT AN APPROPRIATE CRECHE

In the year 1984, when I was posted to All India Radio, Leh, my wife Lalita, a teacher with the J&K education department became terribly disturbed. When asked to narrate the reasons she said, "It will be impossible for me to look after the children. I know how much care you would take in their look after. You would even bathe and massage them, prepare lunch for them and pack the same in the boxes provided and see them off to the school at Fateh Kadal bridge, (The place where the children would board bus for school) besides making it a point to take time off from the office to be with them atleast twice a week at their school".

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In a working-parents family, husband shares a load of chores not so much out of compulsion, but because-he genuinely enjoys what he takes on. Many husbands who share jobs at home like changing the nappy occasionally, preparing tea, small meals, a visit to the park with the kids or conveniently dropping the kids at school en route office when they miss the school bus proclaim themselves different from the average Indian male making it clear that they have joined the progressive ranks.

Such wives, in turn, know that they are fortunate, in having caring husbands. They, in addition to appreciating their husbands, appreciate their mother-in-laws also, saying, "our mother-in-laws are the most balanced women. It is entirely their upbringing which has made our husbands the way they are". The same is a fact also. If the couples today pull together in a fair partnership with readiness and place their family above everything else and balance time between work and children, then probably there is less need of a creche for many families.

Some creches, a few years ago in metro cities came under a cloud when some unhealthy practices in their treatment to

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children came to surface. At some creches mild doses of sedatives were administered to children to see that they don't bother them. This way very active babies were found growing dull day by day. At many creches nappies weren't even changed after hours of the same being wet. I visited many creches in Delhi and found the condition same today also.

Many creche owners were found running a creche on one floor of their house, a beauty parlour on the other and a gym in the ground floor. "How could the creche owner club a creche with other businesses", were the complaints of many parents saying that the creche owner charged RS.IOOO/- for four hours of creche time during which the children were kept locked up in a room with an ayah.

Whatever, has been said above does not necessarily mean that the creches should be closed down. A more active role and involvement of parents is needed in the creche system. Let parents form cells to monitor the working of creches in the respective cities. Many women are of the opinion that existence of creches is an important element towards achieving gender equality. The proliferation of private creches therefore is welcome in their

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opinion and the same may hold true under certain circumstances.

Not that the government does not have its hands full, the newly set up national creche fund became operational with the sanction of 150 Anganwadi-cum- Creche centres in the country in December, 1994. Today more than 2000 government funded creches are running all over the country and the same are run by Indian Council for Child Welfare (ICCW) and Department of Women and Child development. We have mobile creches also.

Very clearly, most of the parents today have felt the need for the creche but there is an utmost need to look into the creche quality issue.

Managing kids is not simple as it appears to be. On the face of it, it does not only mean making them eat tiffins packed by their mothers or putting them to sleep. It means inculcating values in these kids. It becomes the responsibility of the creche owner, especially when the parents place such implicit trust in them, to see that the kids are looked after the way parents would have taken care of them.

I am of the opinion that putting infants in creches should be avoided. Babes-in-arms

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can be put in the creches. A reasonable fee should be charged by the creche owner. If the child is above three years, the fee should be low.

Mid-day meals should be provided at the creche. The tiffins of kids packed in the morning are cold, soggy and unsavoury. For kids hot dal and rice can be sufficient and nutritious lunch.

On the first day of the admission, the mother or one of the parents should spend the whole day at the creche with the baby. Next day the baby should be left at the creche for an hour. Thereafter the time should gradually be increased.

The creche owner should be able to shower parental affection on the kids. Love and affection with a little extra care can make children in a creche more disciplined, more independent and they are also able to learn how to share and adjust. They are also more confident as most of the time they have to do most of their things themselves. It has also been seen that those children who were quite fussy about food eat wantingly at a creche.

All said and done, the creche is a creche and a home is a home. The baby should be

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sent to creche only when an utmost need is there and of course when there is no alternative. If and when parents disagree on who does what at certain point or tempers flare and egos clash, the understanding reached therefore is that the work must somehow be sorted out.

Another problem is posed by snide remarks often directed at hard working husbands. Disparaging adjectives ranging from hen-pecked and sissy are applied and it takes the most secure of man to handle such barbs coolly.

If there is one thought these couples give voice to unanimously, it is the belief that the children have enriched their relationship and far from cramping their life style, added a valuable wholeness to it. If parents understand that "any sharing of responsibilities constantly throw up fresh opportunities to discover more about each other and the kids add to the these joys", probably the need to send the babies to creches would be minimal.

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4

THE NEED FOR POCKET MONEY?

When I was a small child and studying in the primary class of Central High School at Fateh Kadal, Srinagar, my mother would pay an Anna (old four paisa coin) as pocket money on every alternate day with the instructions that the same has to be spent on having some fruit in the recess period. To ensure that I had utilised the money on having fruit and fruit only, I had to present to her a little of what I had eaten at school.

This concept of pocket money changed when my children were reading in a prestigious public school (Burn Hall School) at Srinagar in seventies of the twentieth century. They would get whatever they asked for with the

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instructions that they can have anything, (amongst eatables) whatever they like, but they have to keep in mind that the same should be selective and should not have any bad effect on their health. To my astonishment, I found that they deposited with my mother, the pocket money alongwith other cash which they received from my father and mother and also other elders in the family. This way, the kids had substantial saving and also money to spend, whenever any such occassion of spending would come up.

In the same school, I many a time witnessed some parents paying a hundred rupee note as pocket money to their children when they came to drop their children at school. The children who were not fully aware of the value of money spent the money on frivolities like ice-creams, chocolates, chewing gums, cokes etc. for self and friends. I once asked a parent, a house boat owner at Dal Gate, Srinagar as to why doesn't he observe a restraint on giving money to so small a child. "After all, it is for the children that we parents earn," was his prompt reply. Many parents will be astonished to know that kids are getting phenomenal amounts as pocket money today and in many cases it ranges from Rs.500 to Rs.2000 per month and the same

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is spent on ice-creams, cold drinks, chocolates, pizzas and burgers. Many children with their growing months in age ask for timely hike in pocket money. Many a time they are very clear in saying that you as parents today should forget your childhood times and understand that times have changed; whatever is available in the market today was not available during those times. In most households, this battle for more pocket money between the parents and kids has become a very common affair. However, it is essential that parents spend some of their time with kids and explain to them that the amount which they get as pocket money is to be utilised in a fruitful way. The parents after making various pros and cons of the pocket money clear to the children, should not succumb to their demands. The child should not grow with the impression that he can have access to money whenever he wants.

The issue of pocket money should generally arise when the child enters the teen years and when you must decide on the amount-be realistic in your approach and consider the child's needs and the financial capability of your family, before fixing an amount. Many a time I have felt that in their very early years of schooling, children should not carry money to school.

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If at all they want to have ice-cream or anything from the market, the parents can take them along often or on off days to relish whatever they like at a good restaurant. In later years of schooling, a reasonable amount keeping in view the needs of the child and financial capability of the family as said above should be given to the child as pocket money.

All said and done, there is also a proverbial guilt factor, where working parents attempt to compensate for their neglect towards children or paying very or negligible time to children, compensate by showering kids with extra money. Such parents are spoiling their children and denying them the chance of developing a basic comprehension of important value systems-which don't begin or end with money.

The far reaching consequences of not curbing pocket money or other money-related demands can lead to frustration. Also, allowing the child to have privileges like chauffers picking them up in company or office car while parents are in service and then denying them these 'perks' once they are out of service or retire, could backfire. Such children could grow up resorting to social evils.

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Money in a child's hand could spell disaster, but if the child is going out of station or has gone on an outing or to such a place where he needs to spend some money, then he must have ample money in his pocket to tackle an emergency. Such money in the pocket of the child gives him a sense of security. Make the child to learn deposit all cash presents and birthday money received from elders and relatives with their parents who in turn should deposit the same in the bank. Once the child learns it, he will develop a habit of depositing the money with the parent to see the same increase in the Pass book maintained in his name or pay a judicious amount of pocket money with a steady, friendly monitoring and the same will be an invaluable educational experience for children. But, remember without accountability, unlimited amounts of pocket money could only spell trouble.

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5

ACQUIRE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS

As a professional communicator, I have no hesitation in saying that communication skills are most crucial for parents and teachers. It is only the communication skills which make a teacher successful or a failure, as most of the work of teachers, consists of communicating with the students. So, all the parents and teachers should attach utmost importance to the task of acquiring effective communication skills.

To be an effective communicator, one should know what to say, how to say, when to say and whom to say. I call these W's as four W's of effective communication. When we apply these rules to teachers or even

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parents, it means that they should know what to teach, when to teach, how to teach and whom to teach (the age group of the child).

By what to teach, I mean that the parents or the teachers should have a thorough knowledge of the subject or the topic which he has to teach to the child at home or at school respectively. The children today ask so many relevant questions which some-times you may not have even thought of, and the same are supposed to be replied by you correctly and accurately. If you are not able to do that, you will cut a sorry figure and the child will have a bad opinion about you.

How to communicate is a very important principle of communication. This means that the parents should know how to communicate. If one understands how to communicate, then he has mastered the art of communication. In the same manner, if one knows how to teach, then he has mastered the art of teaching. This is the crux of communication or teaching.

When to communicate means that as a parent you are supposed to know the time when your child will be most receptive. You can't communicate to your child when he is

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absorbed in an interesting game. The parent should be fully aware of the context and situation while communicating. If a teacher tries to explain a difficult question when the bell is going to ring, naturally his teaching will have poor impact on students.

For whom do you communicate is also very important. As a communicator in electronic media, I say, "which is my target audience". To make communication effective, the communicator should know his audience. A particular style of communication has to be adopted by us while communicating to a rural audience and the same has to be different from the style adopted by us for an urban educated audience. Also, while communicating to different audiences we have to keep in mind that we have to come down to the level of our listener or viewer so that the communication is effective.

Similarly different levels, backgrounds, languages spoken by the students in a class should be taken into consideration by the teacher to make his teaching effective. Though paying of individual attention to students in a big class is impossible but a teacher should never forget that the students in his class form a heterogeneous group and a particular style of teaching has to be adopted so that the needs of almost

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all the students are satisfied.

To be an expert communicator, one should have mastery over the language. Languages are the media of communication. If you do not know the language in which you are communicating, you can, not only be a bad communicator but also a wrong communicator. Spoken language of an effective communicator should be flawless and free from any pronunciation defects. Some communicators opine that the communicators who deal with literary programmes, language broadcasts or programmes for the students should have a good command over the language and science, health and family welfare, women and other broadcast communicators can be effective communicators even if they do not have mastery over the language. In my opinion, this is not correct. Whatever be the subject of communication, it has to be conveyed through a language spoken and understood by the audience to which you are communicating and you as communicators should have mastery over the same.

The communication becomes effective if and when personal rapport and trust is created between the sender and the receiver. The words and sentences used in

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communication have to be such that the listener should feel that the communicator is concerned about him and his affairs. If we apply this to a class room and a teacher, then teacher is the sender and the student a receiver and there should be a trust, rapport and concern between the two and the same will make presentation and understanding of the communication easy. Teachers who teach in an unconcerned and a mechanical manner do not have proper impact on the students and their teaching falls flat on them. By putting heart and soul in the task of communication, the presentation and understanding of communication becomes easy and the message gets conveyed scientifically.

To all the communicators and teachers of communication skills, the characteristics of effective communication are seven C's and the same are clarity, confidence, credibility, conciseness, cohesion, channel and context. For acquiring all that, lot of practice is needed. Clarity which is of vital importance in communication should be developed by every communicator in him after making a conscious effort for the same. The importance of developing the skill of clear expression should be clear to every teacher in the field of education. Clarity of expression is a great assest for

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every communicator.

Every communicator should be thorough with voice modulation. Communicating in the same tone, in the same speed and in the same manner makes communication dull. If the tone is modulated, communication has better prospectus of proper reception. Teachers should know that not moving their bodies and simply sitting in the chair and talking will not have an effective impact on the children of the class. The teacher has to be an actor and he should be able to dramatise his communication to students. To become effective communicators or teachers, facial expressions, gestures and voice modulation are very important to make the process of communication full of life and vigour. One can sometimes express his feelings best through facial expressions (sorrow, happiness, enthusiasm) than through words so far as non verbal communication is concerned i.e. sometimes body language is more effective than verbal language and the importance of body language should not be under estimated.

Lastly, I have to say that communication in the context of teacher-student or parent-child relationship is not mere communication in the classroom or at home

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respectively, but the teacher should communicate freely with his wards outside classroom and a parent also should communicate freely with his child wherever he gets a chance to do so. The child should be encouraged to ask questions at gatherings, parties, in market places, exhibitions and correct answers for the same should be furnished to him or her. Teachers should have good rapport with children and should try to be counsellors for them on various matters affecting their childhood. Teachers who maintain long distances with the students are not popular as teachers. The role of a teacher is no longer confined to that of an instructor within the classroom. He has to play a bigger role and become academic guardian of students, and try to develop in them their latent talents and their personalities. For all that, close contact with the students is necessary. And, the teacher has to clearly and without confusion, explain and help the students in reaching their goals.

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6

INCULCATE READING HABIT

A survey conducted by me at New Delhi revealed that children's books have few takers these days. A correspondent who conducted the survey along with me also came to this conclusion and accepted that a cute cindrella - like girl's dress with a profusion of frills and buttons, costing as much as Rs 1500/- is sold off in a minute. So are boys toy-bikes and guns priced at Rs 900. But what about children's book's.. A volume costing a paltry Rs 30 lies around on the bookseller's shelf for months". This raises an important question as to what this can be due to? Do children read less only because there is more television to watch? Is the reading habit vanishing in families?

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Is it because the parents have become conditioned to spending less on books?

One of the reason of lack of interest in general books for children can be the present day highly competitive education, which stresses on text books and sometimes guides to examination type of books and also the overloading of syllabi. Rising price of books is also sometimes cited as a reason for lower sales of children's books but even low-priced books published by NBT (National Book Trust) and CBT (Children's book trust) are selling none too well.

I believe, the main reason is the over exposure of children to the electronic visual media and the cable systems-which provide endless viewing of films, crime thrillers and sometimes an overdose of permissive sex, to which the children get used to, at a very early age. Television consumption has increased enormously due to which children are reading less than ever.

There is something special about reading which all of us as parents and teachers are supposed to understand. The process of reading has definitely a significance in a child's development which should be understood. Reading is not passive entertainment but an activity, and getting

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children to read is more difficult than getting them to watch T.V. This is because the reading requires a skill which is developed by an active effort over a period of time. A child first learns to recognize an alphabet and then begins to construct words out of letters. After assigning meaning to the words he transforms the meanings into images in his own mind. Reading, therefore, requires a combination of cognitive and imaginative skills. As it is an active process, its rewards are therefore commensurate with the efforts put in. Once a child has successfully read a book himself, he acquires a great sense of creative achievement. This is only because reading requires the child to mediate between what is written in the book and his own perception of it. Many a time as parents and teachers you may have seen a child with a picture book in his hand looking repeatedly at the picture and at the same time listening to the words uttered by parents and teachers for the picture over and over in order to relate what he sees and feels to his own experience. The child fills the gaps in his own way and interprets the contents of the book.

Moreover, the greatest advantage with the book is that the child has time to take up the book for reading any time or put the

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same down at his leisure. Reading allows this and the child can do it at his own place. He can re-read exciting sections and also can underline difficult passages or favourite ones. Children should be encouraged to assimilate, argue over or reject received ideas. Remember, reading sharpens the critical ability. Finally, it may be made clear that reading allows the child an exercise of choice in terms of available material, which could span countries and periods covering vast areas of experience.

How can parents motivate the children to read? Reading and writing are part of the crucial ability to communicate. The process of learning reading and writing starts when your toddler shows an ability to convey and receive ideas, information and also feelings through gestures and words and continues further as you read aloud to him and see him draw with crayons. As you encourage the importance and pleasure of exchanging ideas, it acts as a catalyst to read and write.

The verbal activities can be chiseled by asking the child to weave stories. Tell the child half of a story and make him to complete the same whatever the way he likes and with whatever the ideas he puts forth. This way when the child is made to enter his make-believe world, his

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confidence and pleasure enhances. He feels a strange type of ecstasy in being able to express. This also makes the child to understand how important words are in building a bond of shared experience between the two. The want to read and write gets created.

This also needs to be kept in mind by parents that children need encouragement to believe that they have something important to say. Listen to them with respect and enthusiasm, so that they can speak new words. Remember, a child who loves hearing or telling stories grows into a child who searches books in search of a good story or a tale. A child who learns how to weave stories in his head can organise his ideas and make them clear and interesting to others in later years of childhood. These abilities of your child can make him able to write an essay, a short story or a report on a school function accurately and correctly.

After this exercise, invite the child to put his stories in black and white with drawing of some pictures alongwith the written word. This may be difficult in the initial stages, but with proper help and encouragement, you can help the child create a book which will be his own. By

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weaving a story and then putting the same in black and white is such a pleasurable activity and experience that the same can hook a child on books for the rest of his life.

I would also like to say that if you have to inculcate a reading habit in your child, you should inculcate the same in you first, if it is not already there. When your little one sees you reading and when you read to him, you reinforce the idea that reading is pleasurable and also important. Your bookshelf should be full of interesting books on various subjects for children in addition to other books. As you read the book, tell your child about the book, about the author of the book and the contents as well. He will start taking interest in the book and begin to read. When the background is known to him he takes great interest in knowing more. His confidence soars and he starts to believe that he can read and understand the book and the same forms a story base for his taking interest in reading and books.

As said earlier, the parents should read aloud to very young children. Those parents who read to their children know that it is one of the most rewarding experiences of the parenthood, a shared

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experience of pleasure. This enables the child to experience initially the narrative world for himself without having to acquire reading skills and it also has been found useful talking about the text by the parents. This provides the child with a means to reflect on what is being read. In the child's mind, the time spent on books begins to be associated with pleasure. As the child gets older, he will be willing to put up the effort needed to experience this pleasure by himself.

While introducing a child to the book, his level of reading competence should be kept in mind. If this is not kept in mind, the child may find a particular book too difficult or too easy and boring and child may lose interest in books. You should give the right book in the hands of your child and you as parent having an intimate knowledge of the child should best decide on appropriate books. A child needs to be entertained in order to be motivated to read voluntarily, so it is best to encourage a child to read whatever he likes to. Once you see that he has begun to enjoy reading, then he can be guided to be more selective in his choice of literature. Good readers generally emerge from the kind of literature that merely entertains, and then begin to enjoy more complex works.

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There is a good number of interesting, humorous and colourful books available for children. Such books undoubtedly widen the scope of a child's world and children enjoy reading them.

Though some good books are published by National Book Trust and Children's Book Trust, but a lot needs to be done. Writings which relate directly to the young children growing up in today's world need to be published on religious basis. In this lies the potential for growth and the beginnings of a rewarding habit which will stay with the child long into adulthood.

Though, it is an admitted fact that our children today are under more pressure to read textbook, but are not also encouraged by parents and teachers to buy or borrow books from libraries due to which our children hardly read. If parents and teachers really make a conscious effort, then surely the growing madness towards profession or career oriented education which cuts interest in broader areas of learning of the child like fiction, biography, poetry, social sciences and humanities will make the children show excellence in reading of both types of books. The problem deserves deeper consideration and

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it is the urgent obligation of parents, teachers and planners to unravel it systematically through extensive surveys, research and suggest remedial measures to inculcate the habit of reading in our children.

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7

STRIVE FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNCIATION SKILLS IN THE CHILD

I was once travelling in the 1st class railway coach from Jammu to Mumbai. The other three persons travelling with me in the cabin were members of a family, i.e. a couple and their daughter roughly of ten years. The brief case of the male member of the family indicated that he was a scientist. The wife of the scientist also seemed to be a working lady and obviously the child was a student. As soon as the train left Jammu each one of the them opened a book, a journal, a comic of their choice respectively and started reading. None uttered a single word to each other except at the time when one needed something or had to go to bathroom/toilet. After the train

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travelled a distance of roughly a hundred kilometers, I tried to introduce myself to the scientist but his attitude seemed to be very cold. Though he replied back but got again absorbed in his book. I did not sum up the courage to talk to the lady as she seemed to be a very serious type of woman who hardly glanced at his husband lovingly or warmly. The child was also absorbed in her comics. After some hours, I tried to start a conversation again by asking some questions on science. Not only did he reply some questions very briefly but there seemed to be no warmth in his replies. He did not keep the book aside and join in making me feel at ease and also ask a few questions regarding me and my profession. I tried many a time again to talk to him, but in vain.

This type of attitude is not found in this family only, but I have seen many a families communicating very less to each other. Sometimes if at all they communicate to each other the same is communicated very badly creating annoyance in each other. Many husbands communicate to their wives only when they are in need of a cup of tea, a shirt being got pressed or to have dinner etc. In many families very less communication takes place between parents and children. Very

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clearly, we not only are bad communicators but also many a time do not communicate at all.

As a professional communicator, I certainly have a vested interest in the growth and development of good communication skills in children. I am of this opinion that much does not seem to have been done by media in the development of the art of communication as it should have been.

The media which can do a yeoman service in development of the art of communication in our children to make them good communicators in future years of life also seems to be having step motherly attitude towards the same and also the children. It is not that the media is at fault, but we do not have the right kind of communicators who could take the much needed interest in providing the right kind of interesting stories, skits, plays and songs of children's interest in which maximum involvement of children in shape of their response in verbal communication could be taken care of. Against the opinion of all my fellow communicators, I am very clear is saying that the right kind of communicators is declining, and the communicators with the background of degrees and diplomas in communication do

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not consider it as an art, which it essentially is. In other words, communicators today give more importance to the written word, a writer in themselves rather than the spoken word i.e. a communicator in them. Obviously their presentations become mere transfer of information in a monotonous and laborious way rather than entertaining, exciting and full of near life and real life situations and experiences. Unless parents, teacher and communicators do not feel concerned about the art of verbal communication with all its creative aspects, we can never make our children good communicators of tomorrow. The quality of verbal communication also is not likely to improve.

Many media Mughals believe that Indians are not interested in the art of verbal communication. They only want to get information and knowledge from books, journals which they find enough in the market. I generally visited the school of my children at Jammu. I once happened to enter the class of my son, out of curiosity. I did not disturb the teacher in his teaching, instead I watched him teaching without making him or the children aware of my presence. The students many a time wanted to ask questions regarding the lesson being taught but unfortunately the

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teacher did not allow the same. Not only this, he would sometimes make fun of the children asking the question or would rebuke them even before they opened their tiny mouths for asking something.

After sometime, I made an entry in the class room and introduced myself to the teacher and the class. The teacher of the class on coming to know that I am from All India Radio asked me to tell the children something of their interest. I began by asking them very simple and interesting questions on science. Firstly they hesitated to raise their hands for replying but as soon as they could feel that I am encouraging them to come out with the replies, they tried to come out with some good replies. Within 10 minutes all the students felt interested in my questions and the replies of their fellow students. I tried to deduce the replies of the questions from the replies of the students. Almost everybody felt involved and interested in questions and also replies.

There must be millions of such children in our country who may have never been encouraged by parents and teachers to communicate verbally with ease and also for appropriate Length of time.

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You may have seen that a boy or a girl, while average in school, became successful in life despite a poor academic performance. On the other hand, quite often it so happened that an intelligent student lost out in spite of his academic excellence.

Very clearly, it is not the academic excellence only which can take you to the greater heights but it is excellence in communication also which can give you the right expected results. It is the communicative ability that makes the person strike the right relationship needed for being successful. Children who have the brain but lack the feel lose it.

In many American Universities, where Asian students go for studying it has been found, that students of various Asian countries did not easily mix with each other. Many like students prior to their going abroad were refered to me for an expert advice. I took it upon my shoulders and ended up being a counsellor for some of them who wanted to go to American universities from Delhi.

Communication is the essence of relationships and good relationships are intrinsic to being successful. I have tried the use of real life situations, role playing, stimulating exercises and games, participation in

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discussions, acting and motivating children through appreciation to enhance the communicative abilities of children. I have been able to achieve in most of them the understanding of the art of getting a message across effectively.

It should be borne in mind that the art of getting a message across effectively is a vital part of being a successful person. It is through communication that people assert distinctiveness, individuality and thus the essence. When a person is unable to say clearly what he means because of nervousness, timidity or foggy thought process, his personality is dimmed. Systematic training can help children become effective communicators. Many children have been trained by me in effective communication skills (oral and written).

With the social and technological environment today posing a threat to the communication process and with nuclear families, busy parents and television impairing conversation and eliminating communication in families, co-operation and association, good communication has become all the more imperative. Advice on best conversation and communication skills can be sought to develop such qualities in children in even early years of life.

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Almost every year, I am invited to give some lectures on communication. Initially the organisers were not sure of the response of their students though most of the students knew me because of my association with youth service of All India Radio. The days on which my lectures are there, all the students attend my lectures and there is a volley of questions from the students after the lecture is over. What I am trying to highlight is that it is absolutely wrong to say that children are not interested in verbal communication, but certainly there is no encouragement on the part of parents and teachers in this particular aspect of personality development.

Teachers should take keen interest in encouraging the students to speak up in the class instead of making their teaching a one way traffic. Making the students to learn express themselves in front of others and without any shyness will go a long way in developing excellent communication skills in children.

Parents should encourage their children to rehearse class room recitations at home. Make them understand as to how they can express themselves better. Talk to them about the level of the voice they should

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maintain when talking to an individual who is in front of them and also the level to be taken care of when talking to a group. Debates and symposia which are organised by schools on yearly basis can be arranged on weekly basis. Tell the students to narrate a story in a dramatised form in front of other students. Monologues, when made use of, by students after making a conscious effort of mimicry i.e. copying some voices and actions of film actors, leaders, teachers can develop communication skills in the child. Asking the students to discuss the problems confronting them in front of teachers and other students with also providing probable solutions for the same can be very helpful in making the students develop the skill of excellent communication.

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8

FOSTER INITIATIVE

At Srinagar in the valley of Kashmir, I have seen many groups of small children, who generally are the sons and daughters of boatmen, selling match boxes by dozens at Habba Kadal and also at other market places and other bridges and the like which also generally form small market places at Srinagar. When these small children grow up a little, they widen their business by having smaller shops or readies (a small mobile shop on wheels) selling dried fish, dried beans, pulses, dry vegetables and fresh vegetables, rice and also condiments, and at a grown up age of twenty years most of them jump in big business deals owning a big shop or a godown at renowned

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business centres of Srinagar.

A son of my friend was not able to perform well in his studies though his father had a great desire to make him an engineer or a doctor. After seeing his son pass in matriculation which he did after spending two years in the same class, he sought my advice for chalking out future programme for his son. I had seen this boy, many a time, at a medical shop of probably one of his friends. Keeping this in mind, I asked him as to what interested him most. Prompt came the reply "medicines". Very clearly he showed his interest in medical business. For jumping in a business and that too of pharmaceuticals, I prepared his mind to go in for atleast a diploma in pharmacy to have a retail license for selling of medicines. He at once agreed and was sent to Bangalore for undergoing a diploma course in pharmacy. Today he runs a medical shop in a prime location at Jammu and is doing good business in medicine.

Successful children have always been given a boost by their parents and even sometimes teachers or anybody associated with the family. Right motivation at the right time of childhood which is generally needed by the child does miracles.

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A cousin of mine was able to perform some tricks with playing cards in childhood. Later, he learnt to perform some tricks in the science laboratory at school. After sometime he came in contact with a magician who had come to perform at our school. He showed keen interest in magic and performed a few tricks in presence of all the students and teachers. The magician who was from Calcutta, also felt interested in the keen interest shown by the boy. My cousin talked to his parents about his ambition of becoming a magician. The father who was already aware of such traits of his child at once allowed him to go to Calcutta and fulfil his desire of becoming a magician. Today he is renowned magician of Calcutta and is able to perform tricks which very less magicians are able to perform. The boy i.e. my cousin was allowed by the parents to take a decision himself. They also showed trust in his decision and did not pressurise him to do things the other way.

Letting children to have a say in making decisions helps to build self confidence in them. Children should be made to understand as to how they can make sensible choices. Helping child to make a choice in selecting the cloth for his trousers or suit by telling him about the plus

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and minus points of different cloths, and finally allowing him to make a choice after making an assessment himself, and then trusting his judgement can go a long way in making your child to believe in himself and have the courage to act; then it has to be made clear to him that you believe in him and his decision.

Many neo-rich or so called rich parents are in the habit of providing hundreds and thousands of rupees to their children as pocket money. When this money comes to them, very easily, they spend it lavishly. They get everything, whatever they ask for, from their parents and the same keeps them away from having an ambition. These children go to school for fun, and also for spending money, which their parents provide even if they may not feel a need for the same.

The most powerful force in a child's life are his or her parents, and it is the duty of every parent not to provide to the child what he does not need. Kindle the flame of ambition in his mind and give him an opportunity to succeed and then appreciate and praise his effort. Every parent should keep games like chess, scrabble, carrom etc. around in the home so that the children play the same and enjoy easy victories;

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whenever they choose, the children should be allowed to enter into competitive games from time to time. You, as a parent should allow them to beat you in a game and let them hear that you talk positively about them, their reading habits, playing of games etc., to the people visiting your home.

Independence can also be promoted in a child by encouraging him to express his views. Once a child believes that his opinion has a value, he feels that he has a license to go further. If a child is given a feeling that his opinion makes no difference then he stops speaking further or moving further in that direction. Being a media expert and a professional communicator myself, I am of this opinion that you as a parent should have more conversation with your children and also listen to them carefully. By this you can very clearly understand their individuality, and what motivates them. If you do not know that what motivates your child, it will be very difficult for you to give him a boost.

If you want your child to be possessed with drive and initiative then teach him how to work, compete and also achieve.

Many a time, your child may show an inclination

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for a particular thing which you may not be able to purchase for him or her due to some financial constraints. Tell him clearly and ask him how he can help to raise the finances of the family. One day I asked my child to suggest some means to raise the finances of the family. He at once suggested to have a small poultry farm, because he always showed a great desire to have some birds at home. His suggestion was accepted and a small poultry farm came into being at our home. This way he became fully aware about the needs and wants of the family in addition to knowing what is required to earn. Though you may be able to do a certain job better but do not tell your child the same, instead offer hints on doing the job well. This will help your child to have positive feelings for working hard on any project.

As a parent, never do everything at your home yourself when your children are with you. Never solve the problems of your child yourself. Many a parent are in the habit of doing the home work of their children also. This way the child grows dependant on you. Make your children to do their home work themselves. Tell them to think on their problems, which generally are of trivial nature, themselves. Introduce them to offer you a helping hand in your daily

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chores. These exercises promote activity in your child and restrict him from watching TV continuously or playing video or computer games without interruption i.e. promotion of passivity requiring less initiative gets avoided.

Broaden the mental horizons of your child. A qualified young man who joined All India Radio as an announcer came to my room for seeking my advice on working as an effective and an efficient announcer. This was his first job offer for which he had shown great interest. Whatever I could do for him that time was done by me, but after a few years of working as announcer, I could feel that he somehow feels dissatisfied. He again asked for my advice, and I cited a number of careers to him. Today, he is working as District Development Commissioner after competing for IAS. Introduce your children to various activities and see that they participate actively in these competitions, whenever the same are held. Initiate a project for them and then tell them to work independently on the same. Though initially the results may not be encouraging, but once he is able to hit on something, he will definitely get encouraged to pursue the same. When children grow in an active and independent environment, they discover the

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value of becoming involved.

To see your child develop in an active and an independent individual of the society, this is the time to foster initiative in him.

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INFUSE QUALITIES OF LEADERSHIP

Today, the road leading to Amarnath cave in the valley of Kashmir is clear and prominent but there was a time approximately thirty years back when the same was not so. I was roughly ten years old when I went on Amamath yatra along with a group of other students of my class and some of my cousins. The holy pilgrimage to Amarnath cave was not undertaken by us at the right pilgrimage time but we went on pilgrimage a month earlier. After moving forward from Chandenwari (A place on way to Amarnath Yatra where from second days journey to Amarnath cave starts after leaving Pahalgam on the first day of journey) and travelling a distance of roughly seven kms,

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we lost our way in the mountainous area. It seemed that we all were wandering hopelessly. There was no trace of any living creature anywhere except our group. Cold and hungry, we felt that all of us are going to die. Almost all began to weep. After feeling depressed and also weeping for sometime, the words "never give-in" of my father echoed in my ears and an idea struck my mind. I stood up and told all of them to follow me. As soon as I told them firmly and confidently to follow me the second time, all of them stood up, wiped off their tears and followed me, hoping against hope, that probably I somehow have been able to get the idea of the road leading to cave. After moving approximately for two kilometers some began to shout, "we don't want to kill ourselves, we will go back". I regained my confidence and told them that returning back will in no way solve our problem. If we will move forward as we are ascending the mountainous range, we will definitely find somebody who can come to our rescue. All followed me, though reluctantly. Moving for two kilometers more, we found some Gujjars. Our joy knew no bounds. The Gujjars on seeing our condition lit fire for us to provide warmth and provided milk and satoo (Maize flour) to fill our hungry stomachs. They then put us on the right path to holy cave.

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After returning from Amarnath yatra, I was labelled as a born leader by all my classmates, teachers, relatives and friends, though I had previously also exhibited such qualities in all the activities of the school. At a very young age, I had swimmed across the Dal Lake, twice.

Exhibiting leadership qualities in childhood at your school or in play pays off that day and in future also, not only in making you a leader in future years to come but in making you a successful adult.

As a teacher for ten long years and also a media expert and a communicator for the last twenty years, I am fully convinced that leaders are not born but are made. Parents who infuse, qualities of leadership in the minds of their children, give the children strength of mind and independent thinking. They do not succumb to pressures and follow their own set beliefs. It is only these children who run organisations and lead the community in future years of life.

How to infuse the qualities of leadership in the child?
If your child is interested in doing something extra-ordinary but exhibits a half hearted approach towards doing the same; infuse

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confidence in him by saying, "I know you can do it". If your child wants to participate in a debate, but shows lack of confidence, infuse confidence in him by saying, "you can do it, and you can do it many times better than other children of your school", and see that he really does it. Building confidence should begin as soon as the child stands upon his own legs for the first time. Taking out first step towards you and every subsequent step of life should lead to more confidence and success in his life. Every success is important in life. But remember, never create confidence in your child while backing upon insincerity. Criticize your child at an appropriate time and in an appropriate manner. Instructions and praise should be the hallmark of criticism. If your child has missed two questions in his examination, he doesn't need to be reminded that he has lost two questions because he is fully aware that he has missed the questions. Praise his efforts of solving other questions and attempting the missed two also. Tell him that in annual examination or next examination he should take care not to allow the same to happen again.

I was roughly ten years old when I was in the habit of writing some lines and when my father would come across some pieces of paper having my lines inscribed on them,

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he would feel terribly annoyed. Little did he realise that I would be able to write odes, sonnets and free verse in later years of my life. His contention was that whatever I was attempting was sheer wastage of time and nothing more than that. So my advice to all fathers and mothers is, "if you are the parent of a budding child poet or a budding child artist, don't follow your original impulse, crush his feelings and drown him before he learns to swim". Today, I write because I want to and because I have to. I sometimes hate myself for not being strong enough to do without my daily dose of writing. What I want to emphasize is that if my father would have allowed me to explore the possibilities of becoming a poet and a writer at that early age, probably, I would have achieved twenty years hence, what I have achieved today.

One day, I watched a friends son collect some beautifully shaped small pebbles, when he and myself were engaged in a conversation at Harwan in outskirts of Srinagar. He ran to his father, "daddy, look at these beautiful stones I have found!" He looked at him disapprovingly. You have got all wet and muddy. His face fell and he threw all the stones away unhappily.

I at once realised the situation. I collected

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all the stones and cheered him up by saying, "what beautiful stones you have got! Let us clean all the stones and examine them". We cleaned all the stones and examined them for their shapes, colours and even spots they had. Not only children but adults also advise the person who is willing to explore, to rise to challenges. Yet, all the too often we teach our child to play safe. Iam roughly 45 years old and am having an experience of 40 years of moving on the road, my mother still tells me to move on the road safely, whenever I leave for office or any other place.

Many parents don't allow their children to participate in co-curricular activities at school. One day, when I had decided to take the students of my class on an excursion, I asked them to stand up in the class i.e. in affirmation of going on an excursion. The students who favoured an excursion stood up, and the ones who did not remained sitting. When asked as to why are they not ready to go, they said, "our parents will not allow us". You can guess, which of those will go on to be a leader. Surely, the students who at once responded to my call for excursion are sure to be a leader tomorrow.

Your KG scholar may come home tomorrow

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from the school and announce that he wants to be a film actor. This is not the future you have in mind for him. What do you say? You may ask angrily and start rebuking him, because you want to make him an engineer.

Chances are that, the would be actor, may change his mind after sometime and tell you, "daddy, I want to be an engineer", or he may say that he wants to study medicine. Don't discourage him to have a dream though the same may seem to you totally impractical. Allow his ability to fantasize, groom up.

One who has a vision is a leader. One who has a dream is a leader. And, a leader has the ability to explain the same to others in such a way where he is able to influence them to follow his path. This first step of the ladder is a dream.

My brother's son, Sagar by name, who is hardly seven years old, while watching a road side juggler's son performing a so called feat of diving through a burning bicycle tyre asked me, if he will be allowed by me to do so. "Do it," I said. His joy knew no bounds when he was allowed to perform and he was able to do it and do it more accurately than the juggler's son. Very clear, Sagar was able to examine the pros and

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cons of the problem and then sum up the courage to show the same to others. Those who examine a problem, and then show the same to others, as to how to solve it invariably lead the way. So encourage your child to ask "what if I attempt this?".

Leadership qualities develop in child by practice. As the juggler's son practises his tricks daily, he surely, one day becomes able to perform feats to make a place for himself in circus; in the same way a child exhibiting the qualities of leadership needs to be provided with opportunities to nurture leadership skills. For this, you should enroll your child in dramatic clubs, sports teams, social organisations where he will become experienced in dealing with others and developing leadership qualities.

Children are interested in a particular field, such as, body building, health affairs, dramatics, sports or even rendering a helping hand to others. Allow them to strive for leadership in their own areas of interest. Every one in the class can't be the monitor of the class but a child exhibiting qualities of good acting can become the director of the dramatic club of the school. Operating in a particular area of interest in which one feels interested and at ease build confidence and foundation of leadership in the child.

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At your home, to develop leadership skills in your child, you should, along with other members of the family select a subject for sunday or daily evening discussion and then after asking each member of the family to speak on the subject in turn, listen to them, and also speak yourself on the subject and then summarize what has been agreed upon. Allowing the child to moderate such discussions at home, getting everyone to talk, keeping the members of the family focussed on the subject or the objective of discussion and then evolving a consensus can groom up the child in a leader.

As a professional broadcaster, selection of subjects for discussions, being a moderator for discussions and conducting interviews is included in my duties. The same prompts me to suggest not only my children at home but all my family members about voice level, strength of expression and eye contact. After making your child to learn about voice level, strength of expression, way of expression i.e. where to lay stress on words, where to be fast and where slow in his expression; encourage him to speak in the same way in his class. And you will see the result that your child will be able to speak with confidence and without shyness in the class. Focus on how to succeed. The

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person who believes in success is the one who succeeds, and also the one who inspires others to follow. My younger son is an intelligent and a diligent boy too. He possesses all the skills of passing his examinations with distinction. During his early years of schooling i.e. when he was a student of primaries, though having great potential of passing the examination with distinction, would never seem to accept his potential. Instead of focussing on how to top the list of examinees which he would always do, he worried about how to keep from failing.It was only after a great persuasion that I was able to make him think of success and not obstacles and today his mind is full of radiant optimism. So, always persuade your child to think of success and not failures. Remember, the child who gains inner resolve is the one who tries, falls short, corrects his or her errors, and gets up to do it again.

One of my friend, a doctor by profession owed two thousand rupees to me. Whenever I asked for the return of the loan, he pleaded not to be having money at that time to repay. One day, I, in a dire need of money went to his home for getting the loan advanced to him repaid. He again pleaded to be without any money but promised of withdrawing the money

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from the bank next day and sending the same to my office through his daughter who was booked for recording a programme that day at the All India Radio station in connection with a broadcast. His daughter came to my office and communicated that Papa has told me to tell you that he is down with fever, which he actually is not, and the fact is that he had no money to repay you. She even went to an extent of telling me that her father is a spend thrift and owes money to many of his friends for which he has to tell a lie many a time whenever the question of repaying the loan arises. This example of my doctor friend brings home the point that if a parent dodges paying loans, he can't preach about taking responsibility.

If you tell your son or daughter to communicate a lie, you can't expect your son or daughter to develop respect for you. Not only this, many a time, people make some bad remarks about their neighbours and relations. If you also try to do the same, then don't expect your son or daughter to develop respect for others. Respect, resourcefulness and responsibility are vital and important characteristics which parents should develop in a child. I am of this firm opinion that the parents of leaders definitely exhibit leadership

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qualities, so to develop the leadership qualities in your child, you shall have to be one in qualities.

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10

STIMULATE THOUGHT

"All humans are born geniuses, but half of us are made idiots by the system of education". This unique statement has been made by the famous Psychologist J.P. Guilford and expresses an anguish and anxiety over the prevailing situation. Also, it indicates the extent of damage which is being done by the present system of education to those who have a potential to be creative, who deserve enrichment and opportunities for better self actualisation and also for those who are bestowed with the rare capabilities of carving out their distinct identities in a variety of fields.

Bringing up a child is not an easy task. It is

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the responsibility of the parents and teachers to bring out the hidden potential in the personality of the child. By doing so one can transform it into an enlightened citizen and thus contribute towards man making and nation building.

Human child is an enigma. It appears helpess and dependant. It's identity in the world is determined by outside forces. It receives inputs from parents, teachers, friends and from all those who are around him. In short, the human child is not allowed to grow in a natural way, bloom and also bear fruits for which it is made.

The education a child receives today is all data and information to be repeated in the examination. Education, for most part emphasizes the mastery of the known. Great stress is laid on the evaluative behaviour of judging critically what is wrong. Very little is done to prepare students to cope effectively with the unknown and the ambiguous. They are taught to converge to one right or acceptable answer. The admission criteria, curriculum, methods of teaching, institutional techniques or text books fail to foster creative growth; more often than not they stifle the imaginative and creative capabilities of children.

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The best learning is one where the child is allowed to discover himself. If and when the child is compelled to conform to adult standards, curiosity becomes the first casualty; creativity becomes the second; experimentation the third and originality the last. Introspection, trial and error, tendency to explore and experience are all symmetrically trampled upon unknowingly by parents and teachers only because the child has to be put in an accepted mould. The unique identity of the child is vanquished and the urge to emerge as an individual is removed.

It is the duty of every parent and also a teacher to sensitise his child/student-sensitise him towards problems, ideas, ideals-pain and suffering. Unfortunately what happens in most of the homes and schools is the reverse of it. When we ask students to write an essay, I have always felt that there is hardly any original composition work done by the students. In schools, the periods allotted for language teaching are always utilised for dictating some ready made essays and the same are memorised by the students for reproducing mechanically in the examinations. The worst part of it being that the composition dictated to the student is never explained to him.

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When we talk of essay, then instead of dictating the essay, a parent or a teacher should try to motivate the students to "compose" anything on his own and the topic before him should be unconventional and hence stimulating and challenging. The student must be stimulated to think and made to put forth his thoughts and arguments on a given topic.

Many a parent make their children to cram problems and sayings such as "Health is wealth", "slow and steady wins the race", "An apple a day keeps the doctor away" and the like. I feel the same are used by parents for their children so often in the life of the child till almost no life is left in them.

I am of the opinion that as human beings, we not only learn by what we appreciate, but we also learn by what we reject. It may not seem in tune to many of my colleagues, and the reasons for not agreeing with a time-honoured theory may be subjective, but a well argued case for rejection can definitely be a rewarding experience for the mind. For example, a child can be asked to put forth his argument for not liking a particular object, game or dress. It may seem to be a very unconventional approach

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but will surely promote original thinking. If and when quotations or some thought provoking paradoxical statements from any source are given to the child, the same should be of such a nature as to create a mild stir and shock in him. The same should be explained to him in the first instance followed by a lively discussion after which he should be asked to write a paragraph on it.

For example, if we take the case of a typical paradox "the cruelty of a prison starts, once you come out of it", a profound observation of Oscar Wilde, we can explain to the child how an ex-convict is looked down upon by society and then after discussing the same with him, ask him to write a paragraph on it.

Self study to encourage a child to discover new area of knowledge will go a long way in stimulating thought in the child, and the same is one of the most important components in effective child development.

When the child is not allowed to tap his talents and the available reserve of creativity, the child becomes a carbon copy. In order to meet effectively the unknown challenges of the new century, it is imperative to give a new meaning and new

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orientation to education by shifting the emphasis from a mere routine type of learning to creative thinking and problem solving. Kindling the spark of creativity in each child would give the process of learning a fresh look and make it a challenging experience. Even very simple problems of daily life can be used as an advantage to stimulate creative thinking among children.

The prevailing system which at best prepares a good receiver of given knowledge, a good memoriser, a good convergent thinker who, in the ultimate analysis turns out to be conformist, ready to produce set answers to the given problems needs to be changed urgently. The child needs to be given an opportunity to do some off the track thinking, to ask some un-usual but thought provoking questions, to come forward with novel ideas to solve common problems or to use imagination for producing something exciting which can take society a step forward.

Thus, a knowledge based curriculum is no longer a feasible proposition. There must be a definite shift now from bookish learning to thinking.

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11

KINDLE THE SPIRIT OF INQUIRY

The age old belief regarding intelligence quotient has been challenged and the new school believes that intelligence quotient (IQ) cannot be accurately quantified. No child can't be called as totally smart or no child can't be called as totally dull. The need of the hour is to explore the natural talents of a child and how best these can be tapped. Discover where the child's aptitude lies and then start building upon it.

Many parents fear that if their child is not good at maths, he cannot be a product of IITs or IIMs. But little do they realise that every child is a natural mathematician, always counting and comparing sizes and

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shapes, thus ordering his environment. Recognise what your child is good at. Every child can learn. Have high expectations from your child, no matter what the problems. Remember, you as a parent are responsible for helping your child to develop different talents. In doing this, you not only awaken your child's joy of learning, but also fuel the persistence and effort necessary for mastering various skills. Learning is not fixed but develops as the child grows. So, offer this adventure of freedom and experimentation to your child in this age of informatics.

Parents everywhere have begun to worry about the way their children are taught in schools. The anxiety was there earlier also but the fact is that their concern is becoming more pronounced. There have been debates over the "study load" of the pupils, how intensive the curriculum ought to be in different subjects, especially the sciences and mathematics. This is not surprising as a good grounding in these disciplines ensures entry into the professional colleges.

How can scientific temper be developed and spread among the people? It is only at the earlier stages of education that a truly lasting foundation can be laid, say the

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educationists. The involvement of the science teacher to educate the children beyond the classrooms is of crucial importance.

What exactly is the state of science teaching in our schools? Are the institutions giving a fair deal to the children? How can improvements be brought about? These questions deserve a dispassionate answer. With most of the governments in states spending about 1/4th of their budget on education, one expects a lot of qualitative changes over the years in the way science is taught - both theory and practice. The expectation is that the infrastructure has been created and well maintained. But unfortunately this is not the case. Very little has been spend in purchasing the laboratory apparatus, equipment and tools for toning up science education and maximum has been spent on salaries of the staff.

Most of the schools in the country don't give pupils a chance for doing experiments independently. As a teacher, I had also been facing difficulties in handling a class of hundred students when various experiments in teaching of Chemistry and Physics had to be undertaken. I used to call students to observe the experiments and take down

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readings. They could not be allowed to do experiments themselves as either the apparatus was not available or the laboratory would be short of chemicals for the experiment.

The competence of teachers also plays an important role. Teachers, who have passed their B.Sc or M.Sc. long back find it slightly difficult to teach as the Syllabi have been revised. Refresher courses need to be conducted for these teachers at various national level science institutes of this country. Teachers from all the states should be invited to participate in such refresher courses.

The scientists definitely have a role to play in revitalising education in their disciplines and in promoting scientific temper. While organising orientation programmes for science teachers, different simple experiments need to be conducted for the teachers and by the teachers in such a way so that the learning of the laws governing scientific phenomena can literally be child's play. The teachers in turn should teach in an attractive fashion i.e. small dolls that cannot be brought together, ping pong balls that seem to want to be near each other, a toy suddenly disappearing from view - not the outcome of magic but the simple

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scientific phenomena; the effects of magnetism, of the creation of vaccum, refraction, optical illusions and many such principles and aspects of science should be explained by very simple experiments in a fascinating manner.

Science exhibitions should be held in schools periodically with an aim to teach children that science is not a subject that is difficult to understand and grasp but a part of world around them. Simplicity should be the keynote. Abstract concepts should be made concrete through ingenious experiments. Children should be taught to interact with the simple, inexpensive and easily replaceable exhibits and models. This spirit of inquiry is thus kindled and this nudges the child to find out the scientific law behind a particular phenomena.

The exhibits should mainly be divided into three categories i.e. Physics, Chemistry and Biology. In Physics, models dealing with mechanical and electrical energy, magnetic force, light and sound should be displayed. In Chemistry, through uncomplicated equipment, one should be helped to identify chemicals, witness production of gases and test water. Through charts, and the microscope, the wonders of biological world can be unfurled - the physiology and

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anatomy of unicellular and multicellular organisms, and so on.

The child after handling the easily operable models tries to understand the scientific principle through its relevance to his environment. He then checks whether he is right by consulting the placards propped up near the exhibits which should have puzzle on one side and the explanation on the other. In doing so, he gets confidence in learning the new portions of science.

Very clearly, the scientific temper can be developed and spread in children only from earlier stages of education. There is an urgent need to develop some Science centres which need to be evolved, grown and sustained in such a way as if they have surfaced from the educational system itself.

Science exhibitions and science shows which have become a rarity need to be organised at zonal, district, regional and state levels. These exhibitions and shows should be organised by the teachers and the participation of students should be of utmost importance. The show should be made open to parents and the general public. In order to satisfy the curiosity of the people about many science based gadgets in use everyday, the demonstrations should

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be given by the children. There is much potential in children and it depends upon the capability of the parent and the teacher to extract maximum from him to kindle the spirit of inquiry.

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12

VALUE THE CHILD'S VIEWS

It is the responsibility of the parents and teachers to bring out the hidden potential in the personality of the child. A child can be transformed into an enlightened citizen by training the child properly and thus contributing towards man making and nation building. The joy of laying foundation for fulfilment by giving unselfishly is something which cannot be definitely defined. Children are our investment for the future and unless they are nurtured in the appropriate manner, we stand to lose a great deal.

The concept of parenting today is not only confined to guiding the child along the right

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path or merely encouraging him to take up some activity of particular interest. Today's child is propelled into a variety of planned activity after school hours, from cricket to computers, painting to theatre, gym to music. The intention is not that the child should enjoy himself, but to create a champion at a very tender age. Failure to win a series of trophies sometimes proves traumatic for the child. Not only that, but it can erode his confidence as well. He has to cope with the disappointment and disapproval of his parents.

Parents who have themselves been under-achievers or unable to become achievers put enormous pressure on them to become achievers without listening to any word from them. The same many a time has devastating consequences on their tender psyches. No study has ever proved that achievement levels are in any way enhanced by relentless pushing in childhood. Remember, aggressive parenting brings with it the risk of producing socially dysfuctional adults. Such attempts by selfish parents have been proven to have devastating consequences on the child. In most cases, the child does not live up to expectations as he grows up and the glorious careers dreamed of by parents surface into nervous disorders in the child.

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Children have an urge to speak and they expect the parents to listen to them, but the parents have no time to listen to them. The reason being that the parents believe that by talking we give information and listening to children is a waste of time. Not only this, many parents feel that it is they who have to decide about the child's tastes, hobbies, future and all other aspects of his life. In reality, this is not so. Listening to children is highly fruitful. By speaking, the child tries to give out his mind and convey some ideas. Listening on the part of the parent gives a feeling that, "I care for you" and also that he is liked and loved. Also, he is being treated as an individual whose opinion has a value and if the parents ignore him or his words, he gets a feeling that he is unwanted. The same forms an idea about himself where he feels that he is only supposed to listen and act according to his parent's directions. A favourable attitutde is developed by the child towards himself when he is listened to. The child also develops a positive "self concept" which forms the foundation of the personality development in him. It is this positive self concept which helps in developing and conveying ideas which create a feeling in the child that he is valued and his ideas are valuable.

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Once the child feels that he is valued and valuable, he comes out with more and more ideas. If the parents feel that the ideas are good, the child should be appreciated. The plus and minus points should be explained to the child in such a way so that the child is able to see the positive side of himself as far as the merits are concerned. When such a thing happens, the child comes out with more and more ideas. In other words, the child weighs his ideas in a realistic way. This process helps the child to acquire a skill of making effective decisions. This way the child in later years of his life becomes a good decision maker and a problem solver.

Generating a number of ideas also leads to the individual developing into a creative person.

Listening helps the parents to understand the child better i.e. the child's feelings, likes and dislikes, attitudes and aptitudes and the abilities. The child's point of view in this manner makes the parents realise that the child is able to say something valuable. This way the parents understand that "great wisdom comes from the mouth of babies". When this is understood by the parents, the listening to children becomes natural and takes place automatically. An insight into

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the level and the extent of knowledge of the child and the mode of learning comes to surface by listening to the child and understanding the child better. An intelligent parent/teacher after analysis will be able to devise better ways of teaching by doing so. Lack of understanding on the part of parents and teachers could result in defective teaching. For example, they will be teaching something which the child will be knowing already resulting in the learning process to be boring and also wastage of time or the child may not be receptive in learning as to what is being taught. Hence listening to children is of utmost importance.

Since the children imitate parents, as such, children learn to listen only when the parents too do that. If the parents do not listen and the children are asked to listen, the children fail to do so. They also do not trust in what the elders say. When children are listened, they also learn to listen and the same gives rise to respect for other person's point of view which results in improved socialisation and better interaction with others. Listening that way is a cyclic process. The more children feel that they are valued, the more they are willing to listen and give the same value to others.

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Very clearly, listening and being listened to are very simple and effective tools in the overall development of the personality of the child, but this invaluable tool for the process of learning has unfortunately been neglected. For judicious use of this tool, the parents and teachers should have a knowledge of child pscyhology as most of the younger children communicate mostly by non-verbal communications while older children expect every word of theirs to be listened to. The teachers, by listening to children in the class room comes to know of many things about facets of the personality of the children in the class. He can know, who is an introvert or who is an extrovert, who is shy, who is bold and who aggressive. Shy children can be given a chance to express themselves and develop confidence in presence of others. The teacher after becoming a good listener can get an immediate feedback as to how effective his teaching is in the class.

Lastly, I would like to say that in later years of childhood, the parents should listen to their child's choice also in selection of a career. Many a time, I have seen that when a child is born in a doctor's/engineer's or an army officer's family and grows up, it is fed into his brain that he has to become a

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doctor/engineer or an army officer as the case may be. What I mean to say is that the parents especially fathers, pour deeply in the minds of their children what they wish them to be.

Under such rigid circumstances, the thinking ability of the child gets trapped and limited to the extent set by his parents. Gradually, the stage comes when he has to build up his career and he cannot think beyond two alternatives-either "to become a doctor/engineer/army officer like his father or as per his father's wishes" or "to be in a dilemma - what to do, where to go?"

There are some self made people who are clear about what they want and how to achieve it - but only exceptions. Hence, handful of them who have the courage to defend their parents wishes and to welcome complications in the family-life have a third alternative, "It's my life, I can do what I want. Others just accept their parents' wishes as their option".

Very few children are understood by their parents. So, why not take a step towards making every child a lucky one! It is my request to all the parents to let their children free so as to enable them discover their dislikes, wants, abilities and talents

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and decide for themselves. If your son wants to become an interior decorator/fashion designer/news caster, he has discovered this himself, listen to him and believe him. Also, encourage him to achieve his goal.

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13

INCULCATE A WILL TO WIN

A baby is not born with attitudes. Though the baby inherits genes but the conceptions are taught by the parents and teacher in addition to all those who are able to influence the innocently receptive mind of the child. So, childhood training is very important for the mental conditioning to prepare them for the sports of life. To inculcate qualities in children, first parents need to show the way by their own example which will have a deeper effect on the child. An individual should be able to think straight and not panic. That will only be possible if fear is not ingrained in him in childhood. Fear is natural, it can be explained by parents that the same can be

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controlled and overcome.

Fear which is not checked can lead to submission and stress. The feelings of fear when stopped and channelised can be moulded into positive assertive aggression so that the children inflicted by it can be able to have faith and confidence in themselves and deal with any situation. Every individual should know how to think independently and fearlessly and face any kind of situation. The earlier this is done, the better for growing children and adolescents.

As a student of psychology, I have always felt that actually it is all in the mind's conditioning since childhood. A child's up brining is very important for it lays the parameters on which the person functions throughout his or her life. Genetic inheritance and subsequent experiences and environment may also influence a person's development, personality, behavioural patterns and reactions, but the development at the level of childhood is very important for a person's mental set-up. The mental, emotional, psychological and personality conditioning of childhood lasts a lifetime. Why can't this be used in a positive manner? Parents should take extra care that children are reared in such a way that in

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the course of time they develop the habit of clear thinking and are blessed with a mind which can function without being cluttered by fear or nervousness.

Today, young child's life is filled with situations which have a potential to cause conflict : setting arguments with peers, getting along with siblings, sharing of toy and other belongings etc. The parent has to help the child to learn to win over by successful negotiation. The art of finding and implementing solutions to conflicts or disagreements that make every one involved feel satisfied is successful negotiation. This way children will better be able to handle conflicts without resorting to violence and will feel more secure about their ability to make their way through challenging social situations. And, if the children have been negotiating all along the years of childhood, then at the time of adolescence, they can be made to learn carry out compromises. The children who grew up knowing the skill of negotiating are better able to handle business situations and deal office politics (very common today) effectively. For this, the child has to be made to learn to evaluate a situation, think about choices and then act. He has to learn that he should not feel angry or get swept away by

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a whirlwind of emotions. Make him to learn self control by taking him along to market place and see you negotiate on a purchase and show him how a shopkeeper tries to play upon the emotions of the clients and sell the goods at a higher price and the client making his priorities and price clear to him. The child should also know that if he doesn't feel satisfied with what is shown to him, he can leave the shop calmly and coolly without creating a bad taste or a situation triggering anger or violence. He has to learn that if a situation is created in which one is made to feel angry (this is sometimes done to hamper decision), be calm, continue discussion coolly and negotiate further to win.

Whenever you and your child disagree, listen and see things in different perspective and ask the following questions.

i. What was the problem and how did you try to solve it?

   Ask the child to focus exactly on the problem and his steps to handle the same and what in his opinion worked and what didn't.

ii. Is the situation same in the opinion of both of us (Parent & Child)?

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This opens up the idea that for resolving a conflict one has to look at two different points of view. Here the parent should also explain how he sees the situation.

iii. What way did you feel about the happening?

Helping a child talk about his feelings makes him more able to handle intense emotions calmly and also makes it easier for him to understand the ways others express their feelings.

iv. Is there a better way to solve the conflict?

By making a child communicate his way to solution plants the idea that he can take up responsibility and credit for resolving a dispute. By listening to what he has to say and then by Communicating what you have to say, you demonstrate that listening is an important part of winning a situation successfully.

By positive inputs you can inspire a child to be rational and stress free. For this the child needs to be educated how to analyse things, consider pros and cons and later on

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take a decision or create a situation which is favourable to him. The parents should also create an awareness among their children and also illustrate practically how to face emergency without an awkward and hysterial reaction, by just thinking and analysing step by step the facets of the problem and the situation arising out of that and pursue towards a desired goal and result with dtermination and grit. The child has to be told that he has to strive to the utmost without getting nervous about the result. He has to be told that he has to strive for perfection which is hard to come by. The purpose is that the effort should give pleasure than the outcome and the goal should be not to give up. The child who is taught to stretch out to the utmost will learn to be fighter who doesn't submit easily and has the hope to win till the end. Grit, perseverance and a never-say-die attitude helps a child to come out victorious.

My mother's training in inculcation for a will to win in my childhood and also in adulthood has always made me to win in even very odd circumstances of which the best example is being written by me here in this book. My father-in-law, respectfully known as Babu jee, a resident of Bagh-jogi-Lankar, Rainawari, Srinagar and his elder brother owned a hardware shop in the heart

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of the city-Badshah Chowk. My father-in-law being a thorough gentleman and also slightly cowardly by nature was dominated by his elder brother to such an extent that he had forgotton to use the word 'No' for even unwanted and unwarranted wishes and orders of his brother. While taking full advantage of his simplicity and cowardice, his brother tried many means for his ouster from business.

As he was used to filing cases against anybody or everybody for any reason or no reason, to see his designs bear fruit he filed a few false cases against his brother and a few false cases against me in various courts at Srinagar using his employees (at the shop) who were on his side, as witnesses.

When asked by me as to what will he achieve by filing false cases against me, he clearly said, "ouster of Babu Jee from the shop and business". I very politely asked, "how and why?". He said "A respectable government servant like you will definitely feel frustrated by coming to court of law for attendance which will result in strained relations between your father-in-law and you, and also your wife and you. A thorough gentle and straight-forward man which my brother is, will definitely succumb to pressure to save his and your honour". He was fully

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aware of the weaknesses of his brother and was fully confident that his sinister designs will bear fruit. His statement opened my eyes and made me fully conscious of his intentions. This also made me aware of the extent of level to which a brother can stoop down, when greed overpowers his mind. On hearing this, I made up my mind to fight out his every false case in the court of law and surface as a winner on just and genuine grounds though my father-in-law many a time told me that it is a matter of some lakhs and let me part with the same to see that we are not harrassed and harmed in any way.

With a will to win and with the grace of almighty his every false case proved so in the court of law, though for a number of years I had to suffer at his hands. Very clearly, it was only after a tough fight (legal battle) that truth surfaced and I came out as winner.

Later equal shares in the business were taken by the brothers. The purpose of saying as to what has been said above is that in me a will to win had been inculcated which forced me to fight for the injustice meted out to my father-in-law and also even myself for no fault of mine and with the grace of God, I surfaced as a

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winner. In no way in the above said lines my purpose is to create a bad opinion in any person's mind for any other person, but definitely my purpose in these lines is that parents and teachers should understand the ways of inculcating a will to win in children from early years of life.

I am of the opinion that the child should be conditioned to have a pointed and sustained fanaticism to win. What actually has happened to most of us is that we have not been trained to think properly in the situations which are full of stress. Whoever thinks coolly during stress has more chances of winning. Mind counts a lot. Though the body muscles, physical energy and training is necessary but the mind should be equally strong and reliable.

The child should also be made aware of the personal resources and activities and also made to introspect and tap them for they have to mostly depend on their own self in future years to come and that too often without any external help.

It may also be mentioned that the capacity to bear failure should also be there so that a failure is not a shattering blow, if the child has to face any. So, there should be humility and less ego for a healthy

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acceptance that one can make mistakes and lose. A person should be able to forgive himself for mistakes without regrets and go on with his pursuit of excellence.

I am of the opinion that a child should not only be able to forgive himself for mistakes without regrets but he should have the ability to bounce back when sometimes bad things happen. Children often don't have the experience that when something bad happens i.e. their friend stops talking to them or any stranger snubs them for none of their fault - it's not the end of the world. What they feel and think is that such situations will last for ever and when the child feels that the cause of his distress is permanent, it lessens his ability of perseverance. The child should be make to understand that the situation is temporary.

The saying "practice makes a man perfect" has mostly been applied by me on many children. Whenever I have seen a child depressed or whenever such children were got to me for advice, I would very simply ask the child to think of a way which would make him come out of this and sharpen his skill. So don't protect your child from sadness and stress, instead encourage him to figure out his own solution.

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There is no doubt in it that children need your guidance but if you give them too much of it, they don't learn to think for themselves in stressful situations. Make you child responsible for many tasks at home and see how he builds independence, competence and self-reliance.

One was thrilled to see Ms. Sushmita Sen and Ms. Aishwarya Rai becoming Miss Universe and Miss World, respectively. Also, the winning of Miss world title in London on December 4, 1999 by Ms. Yukta Mookhey by beating 93 other contestants from around the world gave us immense pleasure.

Lara Dutta, the 21 year-old Femina Miss India was crowned Miss Universe 2000 on May 13, 2000. The making of a winner makes the winner to think in that direction only. It was her supreme confidence when she said, "I know there are going to be representatives from 90 countries. It's going to be overwhelming, but I am not going to be intimidated". It is also noteworthy that for a winner the road to achievement is not paved with roses. Lara had to polish her speech and diction, shed 4 kgs to a cool 53 on a 5'8" frame, give up modelling assignments and undergo other rigrous sessions prior to the event for

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bagging the title. Femina Miss India world, Priyanka Chopra was crowned Miss world just months after Lara Dutta. Femina Miss India Universe, won the Miss Universe title. This was the second consecutive year India carried away the Miss World crown - it was reigning Miss World Yukta Mookhey who passed on her crown to Priyanka at a gala function at London's Millenium Dome.

"I am going to win it" were her exact words which she spoke before winning the crown.

They won amongst other things, mostly because they were able to give quotable answers quite effortlessly with a cool head and spell out the same in front of a such crowded audience. This confidence, in my opinion, is developed from the type of mental conditioning during childhood. The interviewee who is taught to keep his head cool is often selected because his mind is not distracted and pre-occupied by nervousness. A child should be made to learn to have a free mind which can think out a situation rationally and logically and control the brain, nerves, muscles and all body parts to function normally. When a person is relaxed, the work is always done better. Of course by "relaxed" I mean being free of tension and exactly not to mean having a lackadaisical and laid back

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attitude. Effort, perseverance, diligence and hard work, is necessary for excellence, barring probably for geniuses; who are very rare.

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14

EDUCATE ON IMPORTANT SEXUAL MATTERS

How have I been born and which agency brought me into this world. Roughly a decade back this question was put to my friend by his son, who curiously wanted his father to explain the details about the birth of babies. The father explained to him about the birth of babies using all the artificial theories. As a father myself, I know, I can also be guilty as any other father. If my child also asked me the same question that time as was put to my friend; I may not explode all the artificial theories on which I have been nourished by my parents in my childhood, but definitely I may also have felt great hesitation in telling him every minute detail from union of sperm and egg

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to childbirth.

None of such answers or incomplete details is what today's kid expects. This is because the environment (satellite televison and AIDS) has initiated his curiousity about the "facts of life". The topic of sex and sexuality is rapidly vanishing from the list of taboos that the parental generation grew up with. Every time you switch on your television set, there's something of sex waiting to educate. Turn the pages of most of the magazines and you will find experts in the field communicating with a frankness that befits the turn of the century. View any number from any latest album and notice the subtle messages which find a place in our sub- conscious.

In this magnetic field of sex, children are far more comfortable than their parents ever were.

To probe into the extent of knowledge which our children have and also to know what exactly they seem to be interested in, I visited a number of schools at different places in the country and contacted many school children for their views. "I love to make passes on the girls, tease them and flirt with them", says a seven year old boy S, "flirting is an art and that too creative.

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Everybody can't do that", he adds. N, who is hardly 9 years old says, "I love to watch TV, have a nice food, read good comics and view sexy girls. An 8 year old girl L says, "I don't want to grow up to have sex. I want to have it anytime now". A 12 year old girl R says, she hates parental suppression, "My parents nag me all the time. I love freedom". A 13 year old boy says, "I want to watch "Bay Watch" and other like sexy programmes on TV when everybody at home is asleep". "Love stimulates creativity and provides energy, sex is a positive energy", says B a 14 year old boy. (The names of the girls and boys have not been mentioned even though they did not want that the same should be kept as a secret) My purpose here is to communicate to the reader i.e. parents and teachers about the present day thinking process of the children.

What about very small children who are in the age group of 3 and a half year and 5 or 5 and a half year? "Papa, on your way back from office, please bring a condom for me to save myself from AIDS". This was communicated to me by the father of a child who thought that the advertisement "AIDS is a killer disease; save yourself; use condoms" was responsible for this statement from a child who neither knew

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what AIDS is nor what a condom is. Another such statement came from a six year old child who advised a fellow girl student. "Tell your Papa to use Nirodh and your mother to eat Mala-D if you don't want more brothers and sisters". A five year old girl asked her mother, "Do you and daddy have sexual relations?" The child's mother who is intelligent and educated thought it was an appropriate moment to discuss a few facts about life with her daughter. So, she replied, "of course, we do". The youngester immediately fired back, "why then don't I ever meet any of them?" Most of what is quoted above is the result of exposure to all kinds of TV channels, magazines and other material to which these children are exposed daily.

"My parents are strange" says D explaining that when his younger sister wanted to know about "the pill" that was being discussed on television, his parents blushed and looked embarrassed and told her that she would know about it when the time was right. D then took it upon his 12 year shoulders to tell her that the pill was something women took to stop their periods, "She's seven and she must know" insists the older but not wiser brother because he himself did not know many details. Obviously, this is the age of

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revealation and yet there exist great areas of darkness. Children of today know and yet they don't know. So where do they go from here? Should they have the access to right and exact scientific information or grow up guessing and thinking whenever they are exposed to the strong magnetic field of relevant and irrelevant messages on sex. When it comes to this question and the children want to know the correct and not half-truth or anything wrong, then the role of the parents and teachers also needs to be exact.

There is no point in saying that my child does not know anything and considering others indecent if they do know. Let us accept they know and have a thirst. The question is whether what they know is correct and do they know the consequences.

The fact that children want to know the mystry of their origin shows that they take an interest in life. It is un-uderstandable as to why the adult should not communicate. I feel that a parent should do the job properly so that the child does not have any wrong notions about the origin. As many of us believe, I do not think that telling the truth about the part of mother in the birth of a child will tarnish in anyway the purity of child's mind. I do not think that there is

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any point in the child retaining a false conception of things when the perfect opportunity to guide him towards the knowledge of real truth comes. Why should a father or a mother always drilling a respect for truth and a horror of lying to the children deceive them over this subject which is so interesting to young minds.

We should realise how important it is to prevent a child becoming attached to wrong ideas about birth, differences between the sexes and sexual life in general. Children can be told everything as long as it is done pleasantly, intelligently and gradually; not according to theoritical plan but knowledgeably of what to say, when to say and how to say. Tact is certainly necessary but presentation of facts in simple manner is still more important.

There is no great drawback in giving the true facts to a child in very early age because the well informed child is apt to talk and can create a better position for the parents if he talks the same to other children also. Adolescents who are aware about the facts are generally proud of this superior knowledge.

Lack of correct information creates a number of functional physical disorders and

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even mental ones. If all of us are ready to accept it, there is no doubt that our adolescents can be spared from a host of serious ailments and character perversions. So, I feel that it is essential that a certain number of ideas should be propounded to them, not once but over and over again, untill there remains no doubt that they have been assimilated. This should take place before adolescence. The boy and girl should be convinced that no one sex is superior to other. It has to be made clear to them that two different sexes play different roles in life.

If our child wants to know the difference between a living thing and a non living thing, we will take every trouble to answer him accurately but when he will ask us something about sex, why should we refuse him this knowledge which is so indispensable. The child at the very first signs of puberty should be given some facts about the changes which are going to take place or which are already happening. The boy has to be told that the signs of puberty which he is beginning to notice are the outward indications of his masculine development. After this, he has to be told about the part played by the father in reproduction. There is no need to give him deep and harsh details of everything. The

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girl also has to be told in the same way. The physical changes which are taking place have to be explained to her and they should be closely linked with the future motherhood.

This way adolescence will become a period of happiness and not of stresses and storms, perplexity and revolt. Many a time it has been seen that adolescents of both sexes very often react with hostility towards the acquisition of sex knowledge; but it has been seen to be because of shock which they cannot stand on hearing the facts of life expounded by the same parents who once told them misleading stories about sex and birth of babies.

As a science teacher, a communicator and a media expert and a father of two, I have always been open to the idea of educating my children on sex and have also been successful in doing so. What schools teach is to briefly dwell on the biological aspects of the reproductive system leaving the class room to giggle and smirk with ignorance. I have yet to see a teacher and a school who/ which will take on the responsibility of a thorough and systematic approach to the topic.

In fact, many people are of the opinion that

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sex education is teaching of sexual act i.e. how to perform intercourse. It is not so and has a lot to do with inter personal relationships, attitudes to the opposite sex, deviations in sex, disease and problems arising out of sexual abuse. It's not enough that children just know about these things. They should be taught how to handle the situation.

All parents should know that children fed on myths and stories grow up with doubts that fester into traumas. The renowned sexologists of our country believe that 80 percent of their patients have sexual problems stemming from myths and taboos handed down from generations, the most common relating to masturbation and the guilt that arises from doing things they are not supposed to do. It manifests itself into severe sexual problems like impotency, premature ejaculation and frigidity.

A young boy with dark circles around his eyes who had visited all the hakims and sex clinics for treatment and also to get treated for his habit of masturbation came to me for advice and probable treatment. Till then, he had spent a lot of money on them and since it was not working, he was worried. He could not break out of vicious circle. Who is to help the children like him? It is the

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duty of parents and teachers. When he was told that the dark circles around his eyes is a natural phenomena and masturbation is not a bad practice on the basis of scientific facts, he got convinced and left going to quacks and clinics of such sort. So, parents give information to your children, so that they are prepared to tackle such problems. Sex education prepares children for coming time in terms of their own physical growth and related factors. Thousands of questions come up in the minds of children for which an intelligent and a learned parent has to find out answers.

Many parents show a lack of concern for change in the behavioural pattern of their wards. They feel that if they are admitted in a good school, they will grow up well. Parents need to accept the responsibility for the behaviour pattern. Young children have to be made to understand the biological impact and health hazards involved in sex at such an early stage in life. They have to be made to understand that sex at tender age is unsafe and if a child has sex, post-relationship depression invariably follows. There is always a risk of premature pregnancy. If one experiences sex at an early age, there is always a risk of suppression and fear- psychosis in the

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future. Children become paranoid and cannot explain their problems.

Children have to be told that sex at early age can make them mental wrecks and they can lose interest in life at a very early age in addition to becoming victims of persistent depression.

This is being said, because a growing tendency of sexual contacts has been found in children in schools and the same is extremely dangerous for the children. Most of them are not aware of the dangers of having sex so early in life. So, there is no harm if the parents take the onus on themselves and educate children about their physical and sexual development and also the dangers, then certainly it will lead to more healthy growth of our children.

Many parents will feel astonished on the hard facts which I am going to communicate now. A random survey was conducted by me at Delhi in various schools and colleges and it was found by me that about 90% teenagers have already had sex before the age of 21 years. Roughly thirty years back when I was a young boy, adolescent sex was definitely in existence, but it was not so rampant as it is today. It is 'not only teenage sex which is on the rise but

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teenage abortions also show a rising trend. When I contacted some leading family planning clinics at Delhi, I was informed that roughly 8 to 10 cases of MTP (medical termination of pregnancy) are received by them in one day, out of which atleast five girls are in the age group of 18 to 25. Most of these girls go to these clinics during the day i.e. during school or college hours for getting their abortions done, so that they can reach home back at such a time as if they had been to school. I was told that many girls are accompanied by a boy who actually is the boyfriend of the girl but behaves as if he is the husband of the girl.

What I want to communicate very clearly to parents is that sexual practices are showing an increased premarital trend and there is also a rise in teenage pregnancies and the same is due to the reason that there is much more freedom, exposure and lack of parental supervision especially during the day.

Not only this, but it has also come to light that today intercourse takes place at much earlier age and kids have multiple partners also. The same can give rise to many infections in girl children and even cervical cancer. Also, an abortion, if not done

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properly and at the hands of an expert doctor can affect the reproductive system and can also cause a permanent damage to female reproductive organs. This clearly means that the responsibility of parents is manifold so far as educating children on sensitive and important matters of sex is concerned.

As puberty proceeds, most of the facts about sex should be completed until by the age of sixteen or seventeen the boy or girl has nothing more to learn.

A survey conducted by me at Delhi for inclusion of sex education as a part of curriculum in schools yielded the following results. (I talked to some children in the age group of 10-15 years).

1. Sushmita : With the child nearing his teens, parents feel the communication gap between them and the child widening when there is the mention of the word sex. Why should parents feel embarrassed at this word? In schools, our teachers skip the topic relating to sex. We should understand that this pertains to basic fact of life that is vital to know. In this age of information technology (IT) can you keep sexual health out of text books?

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2. Lovely : Mere inclusion of sex education in the curriculum is not sufficient to bring about a cultural change. Parents and teachers should not feel embarrassed at the mention of this word. The approach of the parents and teachers in discussions on the topics of sex should be forthright. Though the sensitivity of the subject may not allow the parents to address almost all the issues related to the opposite sex exactly, but the teachers who should be well-trained first and then asked to impart education to children should be frank enough to discuss from A to Z of the sex-education.

3. Nitin : Unfortunately talking about sex isn't seen as a healthy attitude in school, which makes it clear that asking for sex-education will be more un-healthy. It is time for the parents and teachers to change. We overhear lot about sex, HIV and AIDS but not in the way we should know about all this. We are fed sometimes on wrong information by our friends. At school we are fed on such information which is too biological or too mora .stic. When sex education is not the sexual act to be performed and is about the physical and physiological changes then why are the teachers afraid of

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discussing it with students.

4. Ruchika : Not only sex education, but with changing values and attitudes children studying in schools need to be educated on how to have safe sex. It needs to be done because many adolescent boys and girls are indulging in sexual act these days.

5. Sachin : AIDS is going to wipe out roughly 10% of population from the globe in next 20 years. In this scenario, it is un-understandable as to why we don't introduce sex-education in our curriculum.

6. Pamposh : Neither parents nor teachers want to talk about sex to me and unfortunately the sex information comes to me from pornographic magazines and blue films. I also surf the net for such sites. I may be doing wrong but what should I do? Can you tell me? Under the circumstances don't you feel that sex education is a must to keep the children safe.

The children should not only be told about normal sex behaviour but also about abnormal sex behaviour. I would also like to draw the attention of my readers to the

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fact that in the most normal and morally healthy families; sexual incidents of a serious nature occur. The cause of the same is the insufficient care on the part of parents and their lack of understanding and foresight. The situations often take place in the families where the parents close their eyes to hard realities of life. These type of parents have been seen to be morally clean themselves and are not able to imagine even for a moment that anything horrible and unexpected can be done by or with their children. This lack of foresight results into a number of accidents on which the parents have to hang their heads in shame and also repent at leisure.

Clearly the parents have a great responsibility in imparting the necessary information about sex to their children and also have to play a considerable part in the formation of child's ideas, which will subsequently play a considerable part in the development of children.

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15

SPEND QUALITY TIME WITH THE CHILD

When I was a child, the childhood really was a great delight. Though school occupied an important part of our life, but playing games was also an important activity encouraged by parents and teachers. Today, the leisure hours of a child are spent in front of a TV or a computer.

What has remained as a cherished memory of my childhood are the games I played in the compounds of Mujoo Mohalla at Syed Ali Akbar, Srinagar; Chand Mari of Karan Nagar, Srinagar and Polo ground of Kothi Bagh, Srinagar. In the compounds of Mujoo Mohalla the games like "Kath" {a game in which one had to touch only wood (Kath)

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and move on without stopping; while leaving the touch of wood at one place (building etc) and run to touch the wood at another place, if the small piece of wood thrown at you would touch you, then you had to serve} Chori Chori, (Hide and seek) Ratey Ratey and Saze Longe (game played in Kashmir in which "saze" i.e. a bigger round piece of baked clay was used to conquer imaginary rooms of queens and kings and also forts made on ground as big squares using longe i.e. one leg) were played by children from far off places of Srinagar. Many a time, we would hire a bicycle for 4 Annas for half an hour and would cycle from our home to Shankaracharya hill, Dal Lake, Nishat Garden, Shalimar Gaden and Chashma Shahi etc. Also, we would take a rubber boat, which one of our cousins namely Mr. Ramesh Kumar Mujoo had, to Dal Lake, inflate it and then swin in the lake for hours together. A fortnight before "Shiv Ratri". (The greatest festival of Kashmiri Pandits), we assembled, planned and prepared how we would celebrate. On "Navreh" i.e. new year's day we would buy new clothes well in advance. We learnt to win, lose, share and above all, learnt to be together.

Today the attitude of most parents is "stop playing and start working". They see work

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and play as two different things. They feel that play is frivolous.

No one doubts that children learn from television. There is enough testimony to show that they learn efficiently from instructional television. But an average child tends to view more of fantasy and formula programmes such as "Shaktimaan" "Captain Vyom" and other such fantasy serials from other channels and cartoons or films. Not only this, but of late, serials in which souls perform various feats and are telecast from various channels also find large number of viewers amongst children. "Kaun Banega Crorepati" (KBC) is another serial which is casting a spell over television audiences in India. Be it schools, colleges, offices, buses or trains, everybody seems to be on a "Lock Kar Diya Jayey" spree. This star TV hit show has most children and students glued in front of the TV cheering for an unknown contestant. "Swal Das Crore Ka" on Zee Channel proved to be a flop because of complexity of the show; otherwise it would continue to be another compelling spectator sport to the children and adults too. "Jeeto Chapper Phad Key" with Govinda as the anchorperson is another show which has come up to strike a bonanza at the push of a button. No special skill is required to answer the

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simple questions which do not even test the general knowledge of a class II student. Many people feel that there is a clear manipulation in the choice of candidates and the level of questioning. How and why did Mr. Shah Rukh Khan, Ms. Rani Mukherjee, Mr Salman Khan and Mr. Sonali Bendre start with a question which costed Rs. 10,000/- instead of Rs. 1000/-. Why were they allowed to play direct instead of "fastest finger first" amongst ten contestants. The same proved to be true for Mr. Sachin Tendulkar and Ms. Madhuri Dixit though the show was for quake victims of Gujrat.

The whole purpose behind these shows is to make money for the producers / organisers of the show, some lucky contestants and the channel which airs the show is the opinion of many critics of these shows. But the fact remains that many children want to see who is in the hot seat today and they want to see KBC.on TV however tired they may be.

In the early years of childhood when the child is quite foggy about the story world, and real-world, does not know about the value of money, the media has greater impact and if the childern believe that it "really happened", and also that the money

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comes so easily by answering some questions, the same can prove highly detrimental.

Play and creativity have an inter-relationship. Optimum learning in young children occurs when they play. All those involved in educating young children must acquaint themselves with the crucial role of play in the development of each child. I have always felt that for a child, to play is work. Unfortunately the present educational patterns push the child headlong into a bumpy, pressurised ride that makes learning a dry, pleasureless experience. There is currently immense pressure to provide a curriculum that is more structured, with greater emphasis on skill learning than play learning. In this age of knowledge explosion, the learning of skills at the expense of play is supposed to give the child a headstart in "catching up" on all that one ought to know. What is forgotton is the fact that every child has an optimum level for learning particular skills and any attempt to pre-empt that stage is both laborious and unsuccessful.

As children play, they learn to create a world that is simpler than it really is. As the child walks and jumps, pokes and prods, it uses physically maturing skills to probe

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the properties of physical objects. Children discover how to use things as a means to solve problems. They begin to use tools and to do so they must develop skills. This requires much repetition which children enjoy.

The studies have shown that children with prior play experience seem to be less frustrated and more goal directed. They were more attentive to means rather than ends-to process rather than product. The innumerable opportunities they had while playing, the number of trials and errors made without being punished, helped them work out and be attentive to the techniques involved while playing. Play fosters both physical growth and motor coordination, cognitive skills, social and emotional growth and development in language and communication. Play is particularly, attractive, natural to children, enjoyable and rewarding and related to activities which promise intellectual skills.

When some children come to school for the first time, leaving the security of their homes, they find the transition which is too wide to be difficult between the home background and that of the school. A child who is worried all the time about going home, who is afraid to talk to the teacher

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and other children in the class, who is restless, cannot listen when others talk, cannot concentrate or complete the task he or she takes up, cannot be forced to read or write till he feels at ease. The child needs to be gently guided through this difficult transitional phase.

Play occurs only in pressure-free, safe, friendly environment. Children cannot play in an environment which induces fear. As their development progresses, they slowly learn about the physical and social properties of the world. Each year brings with it a great neurological maturity and a greater ability to plan as well as to play. For parents and teachers who guide these children, the golden rule is to begin from where the child "is" rather than where it ought to be.

Most of the children in the age group of 3 to 5 love to play in a garden where there is enough space available in the open air. The child is attracted by the flowers of different colours. As soon as he / she sees a beautiful flower, his / her mind immediately gives a response to pluck it. The child may do all sorts of things with the flower. In the end it will be in bits and pieces. This activity is a strong indicator of curiosity in action. Once the child is helped

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/ guided not to pluck the flower, learning would take place quickly. Generally, in a well maintained garden, there would be a variety of materials to play with (stones of different sizes and colours; leaves and flowers of different sizes, shapes and colours; water taps; water tubs; fountains; wind blowing through the trees; butterflies; bees; dried leaves; fruits on trees; shadow and sunlight. What I want to say is that the natural environment is available and children learn from the environment mostly by themselves though facilitated by parent or teacher. This approach to teaching and learning is the eco - approach or the environmental studies approach.

From the immediate environment, fallen flower buds, seeds, small sticks and other things can be collected and after drying these, the same can be stored in a Polythene bag. The variety of leaves, flowers, fruits and other things are already available in the environment where the children have been taken. Play based teaching - learning activities can be undertaken with these simple materials. Ask the children to sit in groups and make them to learn counting by using the fruits and seeds supplied to them. Tell them to run and collect specific number of leaves / fruits / seeds etc. Make children to use grass,

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leaves, dried sticks and fruits to generate all sorts of figures on the ground. The parents or the teachers role is to facilitate and encourage the children to generate new patterns. Make use of words, very nice, very good, lovely, beautiful for a genuine nice work done and to encourage the children. Also, the parent / teacher can sit along with the children and initiate making patterns by placing the dried pieces of stems in a triangular / circular / rectangular manner and ask them to continue the process. A ladder can be made and all other students asked to continue the process. Small throw-away blocks of wood can be collected from the carpenter and given to children to play with them. Initiate them in play activities. Tell them to form a train, a bus, a building etc. It will be amazing to see the imagination manifest itself into creative design. Generally, children will feel interested in constructing tall towers. Help them to do so by arranging the blocks one over the other. By trial and error, they will learn that to form a tall tower a strong base is needed.

Needless to say that children are able to learn a number of things and develop skills through the play-based activities.

Teachers should work with small groups

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first and later, with large groups. Small group activities such as singing, games, action songs, story telling, reading stories, showing pictures and telling stories from experience charts are excellent group activities. However, these activities should not last for a longer duration of time.

Developing interest in the programme and the activities that the child engages in, is another important task for the teacher. Interest promotes the initial desirable attitude and stimulates the child to pay attention to the project at hand. To capture a child's interest, the teacher has to introduce and initiate the child into activities that are meaningful, familiar and repetitive. When a child is started on the road to learning, everything else takes the back seat. However, in the present day educational framework, ABC takes the centre stage. That is not a "child-centred curriculum". A child-centred curriculum starts with the child - his needs, his interests, his nature and his abilities and then moves on to wider horizons. A child - centred curriculum starting with the child extends to the home, the neighbourhood, and the physical world. It must take into account the way a child learns - using all his senses. Skill based formal curriculum does not give room for the child to find

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about himself / herself. In fact, I have always felt that introducing a child of three to formal reading directly and at once and also writing does more harm than good. This is skill-based learning at the expense of the all round development of the child.

Early experiences of learning of the child should be made successful by making the activities suit the ability level of the child. This builds confidence in the child. Appreciating him for what he has done and making the child feel good about himself is the starting point. If the child is not able to cope with the work in hand, the parents and the teacher should not feel that the child is 'lazy' or 'uninterested'. In such situation a good parent and teacher makes all the difference. A good pupil-teacher relationship is what makes the difference. The child's attitude towards school and learning depends on this alone not only in early stages, but also throughout his student days. It has been seen that nobody fails in the subject of his favourite teacher. Rather the students love the subject because of the teacher.

Not only good pupil-teacher relationship but good parent-child relationship is also necessary for the effective learning of the child. Quite often parents wonder whether

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they are spending sufficient time with their children. Many parents have a guilt feeling regarding the same because, after office hours are dinner parties and other social obligations. Guilt in my opinion is a negative emotion. One has to accept busy life style and children follow suit. The only essential thing is that you have to work at keeping a strong communication link between you and your child alive. While talking to parents who believe that they have a good rapport with their children, it was found by me that there are many ways of keeping in touch with the pre-occupations and interests of child.

Whenever you go on a holiday, choose a place which is far away. Though you may feel that travelling to and fro reduced the number of days at the vacation site, but a lot is gained by spending that time with the child in the train or whatever the mode of transport used. This is quality time -un-in-terrupted by official worries, telephone calls, and day to day worries of living in a city.

I rediscovered my relationship with my son Satyen when I travelled with him to Pune for his admission into an engineering college. Though Satyen was not very comfortable about my decision to

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accompany him but he had to agree because of several reasons. This train journey with him was one of the most memorable events in my life. I could talk with him about all kinds of things and was able to know that he was much more conscious and conscientious than what I had thought.

Parents who feel that busy schedules make it next to impossible to spend time with their children should devise ways and means to spend quality time with them. You can ask your children to join you on sundays and holidays for undertaking cleaning of house and other important hosuehold activities. That will help you keep in touch with them. If you have no interest in household activities, then you can spend the time with your children on these days in playing various indoor games.

The ancient Greeks knew that learning comes from playing. Their concept of education is almost identical to their concept of play. Plato said, "life must be lived as play".

Even while travelling, we can play games like word-building or cards. Make it a point to play a game of carroms, cards, dictionary or word building. Gifting your child a new game is not enough, it is

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important to participate and play with them occassionally. Necessity may be the mother of invention, but "play" is certainly father of it.

I hope that some of this will make you to learn something about yourself and your children and that you will be able to redefine your time and set things right, so that the time you actually spend with your children will bring success to them and to you also.

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16

PREPARE FOR EXAMINATIONS

Examinations are a necessary evil. Even today, when I have roughly twenty five years of service in the electronic media at my back and all academic examinations have been cleared by me approximately thirty years back, I dream of appearing in examinations, performing very poorly because of lack of thorough preparation for the same and waking up at once finding myself disturbed with palms and forehead perspiring profusely. After waking up, I roughly take five mintues to make myself understand that I have appeared in and passed almost all the academic examinations

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long back. Such is the dread created by examinations. Examinations today ought to have been simple but the same have become complicated and competitive. Though in my heart of hearts, I don't favour such examinations but somehow we have not been able to avoid them till date and the same will remain with us for generations to come. This is because we have not been able to find an alternative. So, with this idea in mind that we in any way are not able to avoid examinations for our children, I have dealt in this chapter the ways and means of beating the examination blues which most of the children suffer from today, and also making your child (younger and elder) to fare well in the examination.

Barring a few children whose parents have been consistent all through the academic year, the remainder are afraid of examinations and anxiety and panic grips them. Preparing model answers, cramming them and trying to find out the probable examination questions are the things attempted by the parents and children to brave the ordeal. Elder children lock their rooms and themselves under pile of notes and books. Many read and cram the important portions over and over again. Still others depend on tuitions and preparation classes.

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The households take a diffferent look. TV, cable and movies are restricted. Music is prohibited. Relatives and neghbours are requested to avoid dropping casually till the examinations of children are over.

In case of many elder examinees, examination neurosis is not uncommon. Psychologists have seen that late night sittings, irregular dietary habits and continuous cramming of answers generate in children a strange sort of breathlessness. Some elder examinees feel continuous reeling in their heads. Parental pressures for excelling in the examinations and high expectations of parents make the examinee sometimes feel unsure of preparation. It has also been found by medical experts that almost all examinees - weak, medicore or bright experience sleeplessness, lethargy, a dulling of mind, loss of appetite, aches and pains and a fear psychosis. Many a time examinees feel and say "I am forgetting everything", "I am blanking out", "I am going to fail".

Parents and teachers at this point should realise that examinations lurk in every corner of the life of the children in the same way they work or worked in their life. After realising this it should also be understood

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that no other way has been found till date to judge the potential, knowledge, presence of mind and capability of the child or even the parents and teachers who are also put to test roughly the same way as the children are put to it. Life itself is one big test and sooner the children understand this better it would be.

Next stage therefore is to plan. From the very early childhood examinations, planning schedules and strategies should be thought of well in advance for a relaxed and confident approach of the child to examinations. In the last few days, before the examination, learning new things should be avoided instead planning the methodology of taking the papers by the child should be thought of.

Many children or for that matter even parents feel that to impress an examiner and also to earn good grades lengthy and copious answers to the questions should be written. This is a misconception. As an examiner in education department and media also, I have always been impressed by answers which were to the point, vivid, and illustrated, supported by examples, diagrams and graphs and the like. I have never been impressed by repetitive, boring, lengthy and disjointed answers

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which normally many students take recourse to. Not a colloquial style but simple sentences without spelling and grammatical errors create a very good impression on the examiner.

A student should always read the instructions carefully and spend a minute in framing the answer. Set a time frame for each answer. Reserve at least five minutes for revising at the end. Don't strike off paragraphs in an attempt at doing a better job, what one might call chiselling or brushing. Illegible hand and overwriting, even if the answer content of the examinee is good, if not always but usually fail to impress the examiner. Essay questions should have an introduction, body and conclusion with points and clear thought put in the form of paragraph. Underline points which need highlighting. The answer sheet must look neat, organised and intelligible.

All the parents, teachers and even the students should develop an awareness of the fact that the world is becoming highly competitive day by day and only the fittest survive. Students today are compelled to cope with highest mental burdens like preparations for academic examinations and competitive examinations.

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Many children find it difficult to adjust themselves to such intense stress. But I may make it very clear to parents, teachers and the students that there is no need to worry because the human brain is capable of great powers and proper utilisation of the brain power can lead to good results.

It has been fully established that even the world's greatest genuises utilise only about 15-20 percent of their mind powers. The average human uses only a meagre percentage of his mental capabilities.

For enhancing the mental skills and capabilities, the following tips will be useful.

1. Our brain has two parts, right hemisphere and left hemisphere. The right hemisphere is capable of absorbing and developing abstract concepts and creative skills while the left hemisphere is capable of retaining and developing of mathematical skills. Each is active for about 50 minutes. So, give rest between study periods. That will give brain time to take a brief rest and assimilate what has been studied.

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2. Don't get distracted while studying. Distractions prevent you from absorbing the matter thoroughly and hence the memory retains only superficial and scanty information of what you have studied.

3. No sooner you have chosen a particular topic or chapter for study, first go through it completely, whether you understand it or not. This will give you a preliminary idea about the subject, after which you can concentrate on it thoroughly.

4. Ensure good lighting and ventilation at the place of study. Soft, background instrumental music has been found to be effective in enchancing the brain's working capacity.

5. Do not concentrate on some subject for long and change subjects while studying.

6. Systematic revision of subjects is essential for better memory retention. Research reveals that without revision, a person remembers only about 15 to 20 percent of what he has studied. With the progress of time, the percentage of memory retention still declines. Revision

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is necessary for transferring knowledge from short time memory to long time memory.

7. Immense energy is needed by the brain when it is active. Proper diet will ensure that you brain does not get tired when you are engaged in studying.

Finally, remember examinations are not the end of the world. The children have not to forego their hobbies, sports or any other activity in which they are interested. There is a need to develop various facets of the personality of the child which I have made clear in other chapters of this book. So, cutting off from social circle will not be a healthy practice. What has to be done is that a healthy balance and a sense of proportion has to be maintained between leisure and studies.

Lastly make the child learn to say "no" to distractions like watching TV continuously for hours or continue play without any idea of returning back to books or even long un-necessary and un-healthy conversations with other students of his age-group. Make the child learn to keep his calm and sail through examination confidently and succeed with flying colours.

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17

PAVE WAY FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

My school at Syed Ali Akbar, Fateh Kadal, Srinagar was at a stone's throw from my home and my father, though a very busy person working as a responsible police officer would take out atleast one hour weekly from his busy schedule to come to see my teachers at school and ask them about my performance and progress in school. Not only this, most of the teachers who were known to him and lived in our neighbourhood would often be troubled by my father for communicating to him about my performance in studies and other co-curricular activities. But in today's huge and big schools many children are never

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more than a name in the roll book and no parent bothers even to ask a teacher casually about the performance of a child in school even if he will be knowing the teacher of that particular child.

The educational process begins at home where a strong foundation must be established. The home must motivate discipline, reward and educate. Once a child is placed in school, the parents role shifts to some extent but has to be complementary in every way. Contact teachers if your child has problems that may affect school work. It is easy for teachers to misunderstand and give up on students who avoid work or misbehave.

The education today is highly competitive, so are our schools and unfortunately many parents make children to evaluate themselves in relation to other children, to the disadvantage of the child. Also, many parents are in the habit of labelling their children as stupid, lazy, fool or sometimes even an idiot. Such negative misnomers reinforce undesirable behaviour in a child. Worse still, such utterances lower the self esteem of the child. A child must be appreciated and the same should be done tactfully and demonstrated through expressions, gestures and appropriate

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actions by the parents. The child should also know and feel that he is loved irrespective of his school performance. Sometimes it so happens that a teacher at school does not find time to check the school work of your child or he or she does a poor job i.e. does not take proper care in checking the home work of the child. See the teacher. Discuss with him/her. Share information and tell him / her where he or she has gone wrong. If possible meet parents of other children. Try to get parent-teacher conferences arranged. Cooperate with the teacher in planning and implementing the child's educational programme effectively. The teacher should be informed about the child's personality, his behaviour, his habits, weaknesses and frustrations etc. Implement the programmes that you and the teacher have cooperatively agreed upon. Many parents, who are both working, are in the habit of neglecting their children because of certain constraints. Parents who do not realize that their children need as much attention as was paid to them, when they were siblings are committing a crime so far as development of the child is concerned. I have seen many children coming home smiling after attending school to expect their parents waiting for them at home but to their surprise and shock they rarely find them there. Never promise a child that you will

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be at home when you really will not be. Remember, primary-aged children love to be with parents. A simple walk with the child, a game played with him, doing daily chores side by side are of immense pleasure to the child. While sitting with your child, play the game of word building, built vocabulary, probe him to ask questions, set goals informally and instead of insisting him to get more home work from his teacher, use the time in teaching him to use various objects at home. For the creative parents, use of common objects like clock, calendar, calculator and even computer if available at home lend themselves effectively to learning mathematics, reading and spelling. Parents should try to make out grocery lists in presence of their children, make them to estimate the total cost and then also take them along to market. This will not only be a training for them in purchasing of various household commodities, but will serve as the best maths lesson for them. The parents must teach at home if children are to excel in school.

Developing the right attitude, being in the right frame of mind and putting in the right effort are all the techniques needed for effective studying. Learning is not an unnatural act to be afraid of or to be avoided. Using our brain is an activity

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which is natural and if we use it correctly, learning can be the most pleasurable activity. Effective studying requires specific skills and as said by me in other chapters that in our system of education much is taught, except the art of learning and studying.

My experience as a student, a teacher and a media expert has been that there are proper methods of reading a text book, writing a paper, answering questions, taking a test and managing your time. The first skill you need is assessment. Whenever you want to change something, you need to know exactly where your child is now, and where you want to take him. There are two approaches to make him to study. The first approach is retrospective - you take account of what your child has done, how often he has done it and how well he has done the same. In this approach you have to rely heavily on your own interest in the child and memory. The other way is to keep a diary. Select a period of time, say a fortnight. Begin to write down all that your child does i.e. what does he do, why he does it and how well. For example, woke up at 6.00 a.m., spent ½ an hour in toilet, 20 mts in having a bath, half and hour in having breakfast, 1 hour in playing, one hour in studying text books

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and so on and so forth. Though keeping a "time and activity" based diary for your child is boring, but it is good in the sense that it will show you exactly how some wrongly utilised time or un-utilised time can be spent in a better way. In future years, the same diary may also show your child that how effectively he can utilise his time and how exactly and finally he can excel in some subjects in which he is supposed to excel. The same will also give an insight in the favourite subjects of the child and also the most difficult subjects for which he has to spend more time in studying than his favourite subjects. This will also make him understand how re-arrangement of time in studying can be undertaken.

Here I would like to make a mention of the homework. Children these days come home with homework which is a fact and all of us are used to it. A work schedule needs to be drawn for understanding the same. Child can be allowed to set his own work schedule. This is because some children want to play before they touch their books, others like to complete their homework as soon as they come home. If you aren't home at the time when the child is undertaking homework, call during the homework hour to find out how he is doing. Be tough about maintaining the schedule.

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Make the child responsible for his own homework. If he is not sure about an assignment make him call his classmates for help. If your child tells continuously for some days that he has no homework, see his teachers. Chances are that he is unable to keep up with the lessons in class and thus avoids homework. The same can also be checked with his classmates. They will be able to tell you how much or how little homework is being assigned.

A younger child likes to have his parents around when he does his homework and sometimes you are too tired at the end of the day. If it is so, let someone else be with the child. Sometimes the child is overwhelmed by the amount of homework he has - two maths work sheets, three pages of english copy, one page of hindi copy and a spelling list of 10 words. Help him in getting to tackle the easy ones first. This will give him a sense of achievement and the confidence to continue. Don't frighten him by saying that he has to do all in one sitting. Allow him to work for 30 minutes, then suggest a short break before continuing again. If you don't want to allow him a break or if he also doesn't like a break, then, make him to switch from one subject to another. Breaking the monotony

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may make him work faster. If he has homework for the weekend or holidays, get him started on the difficult assignments first.

Sometime a child says, "I don't know how to do this"! Don't take over and give him the answer. It may speed up the process, but it sends the wrong message. Instead, lead him to it by asking at every step, "what do you think you should do?" or "what are you going to do next?"

Many parents leave homework of the child to tuition teachers. If you feel that your child has necessarily to be under a tutor, then make it sure that you ask for the monthly progress report of the efforts of the child. This way you will know what your child is learning, how he did in the tests conducted by the home tutor.

Never make your child to study at a wrong place. Make him to sit away from window or where other peoples conversations distract him. Sitting in the living room in front of television and asking your child to study in the same room and in front of you is not a good idea. When you begin to practice something like this, you will discover how things will work for your child. Everybody is an individual and what works

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for one may not work the same way for another. So you have also to see which is the best way for your child.

A parent should not assume that teaching is entirely the responsibility of the teacher. In fact the inspiration to study should be from the parents who themselves should develop a habit of studying and create such an atmosphere of studying at home that children automatically learn to study. The influential atmosphere at home can make children understand better that reading can be done even under pressure.

Unfortunately many parents today do not spend much time with their children, and when on some occasions their children ask them to teach them or insist on spending sometime for them, they look for some quick solutions to infuse their children with knowledge. Many think that extra coaching in later years of childhood can make up for years of neglect of early childhood. Many such parents do little reading themselves and spend hours in watching TV and when the child becomes a TV addict then they start scolding him without realising that the habit of watching TV was inculcated by them in their offsprings. If as a parent you are interested in improving the performance of the child at home and at school, then please

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do not watch TV yourself for much time and also do not allow your child to watch TV for a longer duration of time to end him up in a TV addict.

Lastly, a well balanced diet, low in carbohydrates has great influence on the reasoning ability and memory potential of a child and the same should be taken care of by every parent.

Proper rest for mental alertness should also find a prominent place in the agenda of achieving of academic excellence for the child.

Remember every child can't be a topper, but you are a successful parent only if your child is confident and happy in school environment and experiences success by escalating his scores day by day. You are responsible for making this come true. More you participate with your children in the school years, happier, brighter and confident they will be when they will join the world of adults.

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18

DEAL EFFECTIVELY THE ACADEMIC SUCCESSES AND FAILURES

Many a time it has been argued that the system of examinations is nothing more than testing one's power of cramming rather than an assessment of ones faculties. Whether a child understands the subject or not, a child who 'mugs' or learns 'by heart' is assessed as the best child than the one who might be able to grasp and ask questions inquisitively on the subject.

Whatever the pros and cons of an examination, the fact remains that whenever the report card comes, the same somehow or the other tests the parents abilities also. When the child has put his

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report card in the hands of parents, it is time for the parents to deal. What do the parents do? Do they rebuke their little one for not scoring well? Or, do they discourage the child from assessing his worth through artificially created yard sticks of evaluation.

No marks for the right answer. In fact, no single correct solution seems to exist "Each child has a different and distinct personality so there cannot be a single standard prescription for dealing with the academic successes and failures of all children" observe phsychologists. Shouting and making a scene about poor performance in exams could be as damaging to a certain child's psyche as telling another one that marks do not matter at all in life". However, I should guard all the parents against over emphasizing the failure of the child. Don't make him doubt his capacity to learn. Inculcate confidence, not fear of studies.

As parental expectations have attained unreasonable heights as a consequence of intense competition in the present day world, the tonal harshness while criticising "bad" marks has also increased. Many a time I have heard my colleagues saying "I cannot help losing sleep over the fact that my son has scored only 75 percent in class

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II. His every report Card proves that he is an average student. If he continues to perform like this, he will be nowhere by the time he takes his board exams..... I keep drilling this fact in his head" says a concerned father. The anxious father has employed two tutors - for science and maths - to improve his academic performance.

Parents should understand and realise that every child in the class can't get 95 to 98% marks and all the children can't be toppers in the class. Also, they should not expect that their child should come out as a genius in few years of schooling. Learning also does not take place at the same rate and speed. A child may be slow at times and within a short period reach its peak. Such fluctuations should be expected. A slow rate at some period of time does not mean the child is disinterested. He may relax for sometime and then start again. So, being less tense about the child's mediocrity at times will help the parent. More significantly it will help his child also.

Sometimes it so happens that the child pressurised by his father's ambitions for him or her and feeling disappointed that he or she can't fulfil them, the child has almost convinced himself or herself that he or she can't do well in his or her studies.

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Many a time the children have been seen saying "I hate results, I hate report cards".

Hatred and fear of results is risky for child's development. If and when your child hides his report card from you, it should be a clear indication to you that a lot is wrong with your handling of the situation, once the result of the child comes to you or once the result card of the child comes to your hand.

Different children react to failure in different ways. Parental attitude should be such that they encourage the child not to give up hope but identify creative alternatives for their losses or failures. This is a problem parents have to face, when they have children of different capabilities and potential at home. Care should be taken to see that both receive individualised opportunities for creative and intellectual development.

Don't look down at one child and give priority to the other. The parents should communicate to their children that each child is expected to do the very best he or she can and that the child's performance will be individually evaluated, not compared with the record or performance of the other brother or sister.

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A child should come forward to discuss both his successes and failures with his parents. The parents should be supportive to solve and share the child's problems and not to add to them.

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19

PROTECT FROM SEXUAL ABUSE

In the chapter on education of chlid on simple matters of sex, I have made it very clear that there is no dearth of perverts in our society and some of them may be found even in our family or immediate neighbourhood, so every parent has to keep his eyes and ears open to save the girl child from abuse.

Many young girls have learnt to live with eve-teasing which has become a daily affair now,but the physical abuse which children and adolescent girls go through is not easy to forget. You will really be astonished to know that in most of the cases of physical abuse, the child's close relatives

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are involved. An adolescent girl recently told me that she has been abused sexually nine times. Twice by her maternal uncle, thrice by her cousins, once by a roadside romeo when she was returning home late in the evening, twice by her uncle and once by a family friend when he found that she was alone at home.

The first incident of abuse had taken place in her life when she was only seven years old. She also told me that her sister also had been abused in the same way roughly eight times and mostly under the same circumstances and almost by the same persons.

Such facts which seem to be stranger than fiction are often too pathetic to be believed. The abuser knows no age bar. For him the victim can be a twelve month old baby, a five year toddler or a thirteen year old girl. Most of the abusers find themselves safe when their victims are minors as there is least resistance from such victims. The victims of rape who are too little to understand as to what has been done to them are perhaps not as much hit by the emotional trauma as those who are a little more mature, i.e. of the age of nine or ten. This is because in the later age group children can understand the sexual assault

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on them and the same can remain in their memory for a very long period of their life and can also give them a traumatic after effect, feel counsellors who handle these patients. The toddlers or babies may not undergo a traumatic effect as in their ease the sexual harrassment is more like a physical assault where immediate medical attention is needed.

Parents, especially the mothers in the family need to be vigilant and also keep an eye even on every member of the family. Sometimes even their husbands need to be watched by them. I necessarily don't mean that they have to doubt their husbands or other members of the family but I surely mean that they have to be watchful. I know the case of a 12 year old girl who was brought to a doctor friend of mine for treatment. The girl was absolutely withdrawn, having nightmares. She was in such a state of shock that he (Doctor) couldn't get anything out of her. It was only her mother who had to reveal that her daughter was sexually assaulted by her own father. "Initially, she was scared of her father. She is still scared of him. She hardly ever talks to him. She often all at once during her sleep gets up from her bed in extreme mental confusion. Her heart rate increases and she perspires a lot and chings to me for safety as if in

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great danger" said her mother. On probing the mother further she revealed that she has been raped by her father twice and molested many a time from eight years of her age.

From this, it is very clear that whether the patient is a baby, a toddler, a twelve year old girl raped by her father or a 16 year old girl raped by maternal uncle, the apathy is the same. Apart from the preponderant effects of sadness, depression, anger, helplessness and distrust of men, sexually abused children have been found to be prone to variety of psychological and behavioural disturbances caused by the trauma of abuse. These could include bed wetting, nightmares, sleep disorders, depression, anxiety, running away from home, multiple personality disorders, precocious sexual behaviour or its reverse, extreme inhibition and low self-esteem caused by a sense of guilt and shame.

According to psychiatrists, women in comparison with women not having a history of childhood sexual abuse, show evidence of adult sexual disturbance or dysfunction, anxiety and fear and sometimes suicidal behaviour. Data also indicates that 33 percent adults with marital or emotional disorders had been victims of

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sexual abuse during their childhood. According to a research carried out in Mumbai roughly seventy percent of female criminals had been sexually abused as children. It has been found that Indian children are more vulnerable to sexual abuse because on one hand we don't talk about sex and on the other, girls are interacting very early with the adult world.

What exactly constitutes childhood sexual abuse? Many psychologists and legal experts have defined it in their own way. The most accepted definition in my opinion should be as "any sexual behaviour directed at a person under 16 years of age without the persons informed consent. Sexual behaviour may involve touching parts of the child or requesting the child to touch oneself, itself or others; ogling the child in a sexual manner, taking pornographic photographs, or requiring the child to look at parts of the body, sexual acts or other material in a way which is arousing to oneself: verbal comments or suggestions to the child which are intended to threaten the child sexually or otherwise to provide sexual gratification to oneself. It must be defined by every circumstances in which it occurs : in families, in state-run and private institutions, on the street, in class rooms, in pornography advertising and

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films".

In some foreign countries, the studies have indicated that one in four girls and one in six boys are sexually abused before the age of 16. The World Health Organisation says that one in 10 children is sexually abused.

However hard we may shut our eyes but we shall have to accept one reality i.e. the abuser is often a person who happens to be a very near relation of the abused.

Thus, it is very clear that the parents and guardians should be more alarmed. Police will do what it has to, but the family should be more careful especially the mother of the child and that too even while sending her to the neighbours or with a family friend.

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20

CREATE AIDS AWARENESS

All of us have to admit that for the last more than a decade the children in India are exposed to the world through the expansion of the electronic media. In this process, particularly with the growth of foreign satellite channels, they are exposed to sex with violence and crime related to it. In view of these emerging trends, sex education in its psychic and social bearings is of so great an importance that the same can hardly be ignored. Unfortunately, we still bring up our children in ignorance of facts that are vital to them. Considering that the foundation of a child's character is laid during the early years, a faulty upbringing may be responsible for the

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development of various forms of sexual deviations later.

Many of us are still of the opinion that sexuality is unwholesome and indecent for children. The fact is that besides offering information pertaining to methods of regulating sexuality and fertility, sex education provides an opportunity for explaining to children the significance of family life, the importance of love and mutual respect in sexual relations and a framework which draws the children's attention to the moral dimensions of their actions. I am of the opinion that educating children on matters of sex does not lead to moral and social degeneration. Instead, it helps children take informed decisions about their marriage and bearing of children and the conditions under which they can have them.

AIDS in our country began relatively late but its spread is alarming. The non-availability of data on the spread of sexually transmitted diseases ('STD's) in our adolescents is a constraint in assessing the number of AIDS adolescents but there is enough evidence that a large number of adolescents in our country are having unprotected sex. There is also no doubt in it that AIDS awareness campaign in the

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country has been successful to a greater extent. Our basic goal should be to produce the next generation of children fully aware of AIDS and other STD's through sex education and creation of AIDS awareness on collective and also individual basis in every family as a parent and a responsible member of society.

This is only because it has been felt that India will be the world's worst - affected AIDS region in five years time. Professor Roger Short of Monash University feels that India will overtake Africa as the "epicentre of AIDS" in next five years and is likely to have more people infected with the deadly AIDS virus than the rest of the world. We as a nation should feel terribly worried about the alarming rise in AIDS cases in our county. NACO i.e. National AIDS Control Organisation and other NGOs should come forward to share the challenge of fighting back the threat posed to human existence by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

As there is no cure for AIDS, prevention is the only way to check its spread. The AIDS virus, HIV is transmitted through unprotected sex with an infected partner, infected blood, infected needles and from mother to child.

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The virus knocks out the Immune system and allows infections to run rampant. It may take three to ten years to reach this stage. Attempts to find a vaccine or a drug for the virus have been unsuccessful so far.

Studies have shown that a number of school-children are sexually active, so AIDS awareness among our children should find top priority in parents list of priorities for the welfare of the family in general and children in particular. For this all the parents should know some important and vital facts of the disease.

1. Who are the AIDS victims?

The AIDS victims are homosexual/bisexual men and women, prostitutes and promiscuous males and females in addition to those who go in for an unprotected sex with a stranger. Other groups bracketed as "potential victims" of AIDS are the intravenous drug users who are placed on third or fourth level of high risk groups; the recipients of blood (and blood products) that is infected with the virus; the haemophiliacs; and babies of parents who are already carriers before the child is born.

2. What does the virus do?

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No sooner the virus enters the blood stream, it attacks the body's "defence force" undertaken by the T-cells. These cells not only succumb to the attack but turn themselves into a factory for the virus. In this way, an unusual phenomena is observed where the virus multiplies itself at a speed 50-100 times faster than any known virus. The corollary is obvious : a rapid multiplication of the virus brings about a rapid reduction of the body's "defence force" which leaves it helpless against any attack by any kind of harmful virus and germs - subjecting the body to all kinds of "opportunistic infections". It is when the body reaches this stage of defencelessness that a person is said to have developed full blown syndrome called AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome).

Till this date every AIDS victim has succumbed to the scourge. In other words, the only prognosis of AIDS is death.

3. Can AIDS patients be treated?

The word 'cure' is not in the vocabulary of AIDS. Medical scientists point out that one of the difficulties in finding a cure for AIDS is the fantastic rate of mutation and reproduction of the virus. So unless there

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is a miracle the only option that a victim has is to wait for relief by means of death which comes from a few months to few years (In some cases can be ten years) from the time the virus is detected in the human system. And, between these too brief points (of life and death) the unfortunate victim is forced to undergo a series of psychosomatic ordeals which include a caked mouth and throat making drinking, eating and speaking a torture; herpes with ulcerating infection that appears in the mouth, genitals and anus raging for months; uncontrollable diarrhoea, tuberculosis, cancer (Kaposi's Sarcoma), persistent cough, intermittent fever, body pain, acute (pneumonia/loss of weight, memory, thought and speech, breathlessness and so on.

Besides this, the victim must also be prepared to face all the cruel and inhuman treatment which may come from his fellow human beings including his near and dear ones.

4. How can one avoid getting infected by HIV?

Unless you are a member of high-risk group, you need not panic. Some may be concerned about the possibility of contracting the virus while caring for the AIDS patient. This

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has been made clear by the medical experts that the fear of getting the Human Immunodeficiency Virus through casual contact such as by touching the AIDS patient or by being present while he sneezes, is not right. AIDS virus is not transmitted through casual contact. There is no need for such fear. However, according to a study conducted by the WHO, it advises that any activity that could involve the exchange of body fluids with the infected people should be avoided. Deep wet kissing can infect a person while dry kissing i.e. kissing on the cheek does not harm.

If in need of a blood transfusion prefer to use the blood of a known person. Should a person be an intravenous drug user, he should use disposable needles and syringes.

When all is said and done, it is still of paramount importance that we go back to the saying "Prevention is better than cure". As observed the commonest means of contracting the human immunodeficiency virus is sexual intercourse. The best way therefore is to shun all forms of promiscuity and limit sex strictly to one partner. If your habits are clean, you need not fear AIDS.

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21

HELP TO BE HAPPY

The unhappy and worried parents have been known to ruin many a childhood. Children often get tense when they see their parents worried in daily life and tension in a child can manifest itself as conduct disorder, lack of ability to adjust, frustration, phobias and so on. The over-anxious and over-protective parent creates severe tensions in the young child. Likewise, the parent who carries home tensions from the workplace and expresses his or her frustration by screaming at his life partner also creates tension in the child. Beyond doubt, parents who fight in front of their children, cause anxiety in the child. According to experts, most children exposed

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to tension during their formative years inevitably grow up into tense adults.

Happiness is both a state of mind and a 'trait'. The state of happiness is something that comes and goes. The trait of happiness is more enduring - it can be described as 'predisposition' to feelings of well being. Happiness is a skill that can be learnt. By focussing on certain traits parents can raise children with the trait of happiness built into their character.

What I have learnt till date regarding happiness is that "happiness is an act of will". In this unhappy world, everybody has reasons to be unhappy, but we also can shape our reaction to those reasons. My mother had not been a genuinely happy person for most of the period of her life, but I had never seen her unhappy. This was because she never showed like that. Happiness is therefore the parents responsibility and to some extent the child's responsibility as well.

The child can learn the skill of happiness with parents help by coping with small difficulties in childood. Parents can nurture happiness by making their own relationship with each child warm and satisfying. Parents can also make sure that

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their children get together regularly with other kids, by joining a play group or by taking the child to playground when others of the same age are likely to be there. Further, make your home a place where friends of the child feel welcome. No doubt, people with adequate income are happier. Adequate means enough for basic needs and feeling content are essential to make us happy in every way, but it is also not necessary that having these means will necessarily keep us happy. Having more than enough makes a person unhappy and also having less does the same thing. It was found in case of children also. The children who had many toys felt unhappy and also the children who had less or no toys were also unhappy. By drastically reducing the number of toys in case of "more have's" it has found that they became happy and by giving toys to "have not's" or "less have's" it was found that they also became happy.

Happy people also have their unhappiness like everyone else, but they regain their happiness quickly. Everyone has to find out ways to cope with unhappiness and bad days. Parents can help children learn their all important skills. Parents should help children to find out sources of comfort and the ways to have a change in attitude. The child should be taught to find solace in

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things that will restore his sense of well being-watching a movie, playing a game, listening to music, reading a book etc.

To find happiness in the child, the parents should look for it in their own lives. Become a happy person yourself. A child from a happy home has a greater chance of being a happy adult.

The results of parental tension are always graver. It can lead to major changes in the personality of the children. Prolonged exposure to tension at home has been known to affect children very badly. I know of a case in which the father was facing severe harrassment from his wife and sought refuge by joining a religious cult that had very severe rules. His wife stongly opposed to it and harrassed him more along with her children whom she had motivated in such a way that they would always be on her side i.e. the side of their mother. The two sons were badly affected by this due to which their studies also suffered very badly. Though the parents have made peace now, but the children have suffered. Parents do not realize that their fights and unnecessary arguments affect their children more than they imagine.

My father retired from government service

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in the year 1964 and when he was about to retire, he was in a great tension and would say, "I have no bank balance. What can I do to run my household after retirement and that too with a meagre pension". He would always be tense. Though my mother who was always an optimistic lady and would make him understand that he can search for a job after retirement and the salary from the newly undertaken job and the pension will suffice their needs, but he would never feel at ease. I was in school those days and could barely concentrate on my studies because I also began to feel concerned, worried and would feel insecure most of the time. Due to tension, I even failed in the 11th class examination in the first attempt. It was only after one year that my confidence and happiness returned when my father took up a job after retirement and felt happy as earlier.

In the increasingly competitive world of today, the need to excel keeps one on the edge. Parents often transfer their anxities to the children. Do not commit the mistake of narrowly focussing on your child's performance in tests as an indication of progress. Encourage your child to take part in games, interact with peers and look after pets. This will pay more dividends in the long run and will keep the

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child from growing into a nervous adult.

Parental conflict is and has been a source of tremendous tension. Avoid open hostility with your wife in front of your children. Disagreement on a particular point of your husband is not bad, but, when it takes the form of arguements and screaming, it produces anxiety in the child. If there are differences of opinion and decisions need to be taken then things should be discussed with a cool mind and non-emotional manner.

Spend more time with your child. It can work wonders for his self-esteem and all- round-development. Work pressures might be tremendous but what is important is that the time spent with children is qualitatively good.

The parents should practise in their own lives the values that produce happiness. Moreover when they are genuinely happy, they should tell their children why they are happy because it's important to talk about the good days. Make it clear that happiness is a goal you can and must pursue.

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22

BUILD UP STRONG CHARACTER AND INCULCATE HUMAN VALUES

All the newspapers in the country publish stories of morally degenerate acts of individuals, the criminal and mindless doings of politicians and bureaucrats, social ills and national problems and also malfunctioning in all domains. But, I have yet to find any opinion-maker to sum up the intellectual courage to analyse and add all the evidence to answer one question. Will we ever create a great nation of which we had dreamt? If not, then are we able to create at least a prosperous and powerful country with a stable population, abundance of nutritious food for all, no crime and violence, no traffic jams, no air, water and

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noise pollution, clean and green cities, forests filled with trees and wild animals and a decent quality of life for the majority of people. When are we going to be saved from the population explosion and spreading epidemics, piles of garbage and overflowing severs. Will the great majority of Indians ever become moral and self-respecting, rational and disciplined people, and work together to create a happy society free of corruption and callousness, oppression and exploitation, caste conflicts and regional disparities, a society that is absolutely meritocratic and rapidly advancing?

We have failed to create a moral and creative civilisation and a powerful and prosperous nation after we became free. This is because so many of us possess so many wrong character traits. Today, we do not even have the intellectual courage to consider our future objectively. We have so many problems today; bribery and corruption; greed and cheating in money matters; dishonesty in social as well as business relations; callousness and insensitivity to other's sufferings; selfishness and lack of concern for other's well being; oppression of the weak; abuse and exploitation of the poor; general lack of self discipline; weak sense of responsibility; carelessness and negligence; laziness even

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in serious work situations; an unwillingness to live upto promises; nepotism and favouritism in selections for employment and advancement; giving away awards and organising achievements; absence in most individuals of a strong emotional attachment to the nation and its people and from the exploding population to large scale destruction of natural resources and also from the lack of moral instruction at home, in schools and colleges to the theft of priceless articles from even the President's Secretariat. Who is going to educate the lakhs and lakhs of men, women and children of this country? How will one educate them and when will they be educated? How will we persuade Indians to live by high ideals when doing so requires strong self discipline and willingness to forgo illicit gains?

The task is difficult and near impossible because the corruption of every sort has gone into the annals of the society. But, a streak of hope is there as we still have in our society many honest, upright and devoted persons who have strong national character and are ready to change the tide of the time. They need the co-operation of other like-minded people. All thinkers in this direction can form small groups wherever they are or whatever the

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organisation they are serving. These small groups after fully organising themselves can create awareness in people and impart training in character building which is essential. The training of character is not very hard if we develop a will to mould our character, and the character of fellow citizens. (Hitler achieved a tough discipline in the course of a few years. Great thinkers have been able to do so). After that, the individuals have to be made responsible for building the character of the family. For that, as head of the family, we have to be models who have to be committed and who have to themselves imbibe the values and set an example by practising what we preach for the impact and foundation of the members in the family.

Unfortunately, for earning maximum revenue the satellite channels have exposed children to too much fiction, sex, crime and violence on TV and also the grandparents who often played a positive role in the joint family in shaping the character of the grandchildren live much less with them now, thus, the role of parents in imparting right values in children with a view towards improving the national character has become all the more significant.

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Parents influence the life-long well-being of their children. Whatever is done in adulthood is not likely to bear fruits if their childhood is not shaped with the needed caring for, sharing with, and nurturing by the parents. The physical requirements are common to all human beings and animals, as such, the best medium for keeping the man is to develop his super animal qualities i.e. educate him in human values. Education in human values is for the total development of every human being as it also helps other levels like the physical, the intellectual and the mental. It is useful for human beings of all ages but is more useful and has lasting effect on children and adolescents. Ideas and ideals get a strong mental hold, if taught at the youngest age possible, specially between 6-15 or even before.

For considering the relevance of education in human values in the all round development of one's personality, we have to consider the main characteristics of a human being. A man has five levels of being i.e. the physical, the intellectual, the emotional, the psychic and spiritual.

Physical : Every living being has a physical basic feature i.e. every human being has a common physical structure in general with

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animals, the general life of animals and needs the satisfaction of elementary physical needs in the same way other animals need to satisfy.

Intellectual : It is the intellectual aspect which distinguishes a man from other animals. An animal possesses the basic instincts which are common to man and the animal, but it does not have rational and intellectual capacity. The animals have the basic intellect but not the higher emotional feelings.

Emotional : The emotional and rational capacity is purely a human capacity-to think and reason.

Psychic : This is the capacity which clearly demarcates a man from the animal "Man receives love and gives love. It is human psychie, it is the life energy within us by the power of which we receive love and give love". It is the source from where the energy spreads within the human system when we say, "I love you" the question arises what is it that loves? Is it the body, the intellect or the emotion? No, it is the psyche which many people often call as soul.

Spiritual : It is the spiritual aspect which

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takes a man to the higher levels of being i.e. Supra-mental levels. At this level man identifies himself with everything in the universe and transcends them.

The human basic values are truth, righteousness and good conduct, peace, love and non-violence. These five values correspond to the five basic characteristics of human nature "Physical - good conduct and righteousness; intellectual - truth; emotional - peace; Psychic - love, and spiritual - non violence".

The present system of education pays serious attention only to the physical and intellectual aspects. The other three values are neglected. The implications of each value are

Truth : Unfortunately the present day human society is suffering from want of truthfullness in all social and individual dealings. The situation has come to such a level where one individual does not give credence to the others real intentions and takes these no different from only oral assertions. The so called great leaders of the countries also don't believe the great leaders of the other countries.

We should understand that the human

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being is the source of truth and importance of truth in life is so obvious that it does not need any further explanation.

Righteous conduct : The expression of truth in human action is righteousness. Righteous conduct contributes not only to the individual welfare but also to the social good, because society is nothing but the joining together of individuals.

Peace : Human society can't exist without peace. It is only peace which brings happiness in the human social structure, at both individual and social levels. Peace provides harmony at time, in society as well as in the nation and in the world.

Love : Love is a form of energy which each individual transmits and receives. It affects all forms of life. Real love is selfless and it believes and lives in giving and forgiving. Many people are of the opinion that love is the expression of divinity in human soul.

Non violence : Non violence is the offshoot of righteous conduct, truth, peace and love and demonstrates the essential oneness, unity and harmony in creation. It blossoms from the understanding that man has an obligation towards every object and component of universe.

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The education in human values can start by parents and teachers forming groups of themselves and also the children. After that activities like group singing; story telling; dramatics can be held once a week. If you have to see your child excel in all spheres of life then sacrifice on your part is necessary. What I mean to say is that you have to plan the education of your children. For developing strong conduct and character and also imparting correct values in children, the conduct and character of the parents and teachers is very important.

The parents must strengthen their conduct and character first and then go ahead in strengthening the same in children. A group of parents on coming together can do it very nicely, exactly and collectively by undertaking group activities.

Many crimes committed by children have their origin in films they see and the TV which they watch for hours together. You will be astonished to know that on November 30, 2000 an 11 year old boy inspired by films and television shows enacting firing scenes, shot at a friend aged 9 with an air gun causing severe injuries to him. Hit with the "play peflet" the victim

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was admitted in a critical condition in Bhilai hospital. (The air gun used for birds does not require a licence) According to eye witnesses Rajat 11, showed his friend Gurmeet Singh, the new "gift" - an air gun. Rajat then reportedly told him that he wants to enact a film scene. He then aimed his gun at Gurmeet. The pellet hit Gurmeet on the neck and he bled profusely. Rajat fled leaving his friend bleeding.

Hence media has to be conscious of what they have to show. Discussions and seminars involving media men and experts can serve a good purpose. There is an utmost need to produce programmes with the purpose of building the character of the children and the same need to be produced on a large scale to cater to the ethical needs of the children.

The first step in this direction may be very small, but it has always been the first step which when taken in the right manner and direction makes us to travel very long distances. Remember, children need models more than they need critics in building up character and values.

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23

THE GIFTED CHILD

Previously any child of high IQ was supposed to be "gifted". Now there has been a change in this view and children who are gifted in many other ways like mechanical skills, mathematics, scientific abilities, painting, decoration, handicrafts, language skills like reading, writing, debating, leadership qualities, sports and games are also listed in the list of gifted children.

So gifted children can be defined as those children who by virtue of their outstanding abilities are capable of high performance beyond those provided by the regular school programme in order to realise their contribution to self and society. The

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abilities, either potential or demonstrated, to be included are general intellectual ability, creative or productive thinking, specific academic aptitude, leadership qualities, ability in the performing or visual arts and also psychomotor ability. Gifted children surpass normal children in all the desirable physical, socio-emotional language and cognitive characteristics and also other personality traits.

The positive characteristics of the gifted children are that they learn rapidly and easily; retain what they learn without much drill; depth, kind, scope and frequency of their questions shows much curiosity; have rich vocabularies marked by originality of thought and expression and enjoy reading at a mature level. They make frequent use of dictionaries, encyclopaedias and other reference books. They are able to reason and think clearly and precisely.

They have the ability to generalise; to see relationship; comprehend; to make logical associations; are able to know and appreciate many things of which other children are unaware; seek older company among children and enjoy adults company; possess a good sense of humour and are cheerful.

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Neither teachers nor parents welcome all the symptoms of giftedness. Negative characteristics which are unacceptable from an adults point of view are that they may be restless, inattentive; disturbing or annoying to those around them; careless in hand writing; poor in spelling, inaccurate in arithmatic because they are impatient with details requiring role learning or drill. They may be indifferent towards class work; may lack adequate skills in completing home work; may be out spokenly critical of themselves and also of others - an attitude which often alienates adults and children.

Though much has been talked by me in previous chapters regarding the treatment to be meted out by children at the hands of the parents, but in this chapter, I would like to make a mention of treatment to be given to gifted child. Being the parents of a child of unusual talents gives many joys to the parents, but along with this the parents might face some special obstacles, risks, errors and challenges in dealing them. A gifted child who has got enormous potential needs to be guided through proper channels with an added responsibility of being sensitive, supportive, tolerant, patient, resourceful and also encourage him and at the same time not making him over

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confident which may create obstacle for him in future. A gifted child requires a favourable atmosphere for expressing himself or herself, though no particular environment can be said to affect mental development. Though gifted children very often internalise their parents values, interests, attitudes but sometimes they prove to be entirely different from parents. It may be borne in mind that each gifted child is unique, so one can never be sure how they are going to work in any individual case.

The needs of the gifted children may be the same as that of a normal child but additional needs may arise if less acceptance is received by them at the hands of peers and teachers. Hence a need of greater help and understanding at home arises. Though these children excel in one or more areas than non-gifted children but they lack experience and maturity. Sometimes their behaviour leads their parents to treat them as though they are mature and capable of making decisions and setting their own goals and directions which is wrong. Parents should constantly guide and discipline such children.

For nurturing your child's talents, praise and recognition are the basic tools of which a

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mention has been made by me in my previous chapters. Children should be appreciated, encouraged and complimented and the same needs to be sincere and deserving. Though child's giftedness is boosted only through his personal achievements but by allowing the child to make decisions, the child's competence and also self respect and respect for others can be enhanced.

Self confidence is created through honest communication, cooperative planning and decision making in which parents and children examine various alternatives together. As gifted children always excel in their field and need not work hard to achieve their goals so they need to be involved in activities which are more challenging to them. At the same time do not give them the message that they should always come first as it may frustrate them when they fail in any endeavour. Parents should give them enough psychological freedom and safety to take chances, make mistakes and be wrong.

Messages making it clear to the child as to what is expected of him in curricular and co-curricular activities need to be given to him but creating an undesirable pressure on him may make him overschedule his

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time. The same may be sometimes counter productive. While the parents of a gifted child should expect him to do well at school, and praise him for success, they should also be tolerant of inconsistent achievement. Though whatever I am going to say has already been discussed in the chapter, "Deal effectively the successes and failures" but the same is repeated here for the teacher and parents of gifted children for their vital information.

The parents of the gifted children must realise that learning does not take place at the same rate and speed. A child may be slow at times and within a short period reach its peak. Such fluctuations should be expected. A slow rate does not mean that the child is disinterested. He may relax for sometime and start again. When faced with a failure, the gifted and non gifted children react differently. Parental attitude should be such that they encourage the child not to give up hope but identify creative alternatives for their losses or failures. Such problem has to be faced by the parents of a gifted child. Care has to be taken that both gifted and the other children receive individualised opportunities for creative and intellectual development. Never give priority only to the gifted child and look down at the non gifted child. The parents

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should communicate to their children that each child is expected to do the very best he or she can and that the child's performance will be individually evaluated, not compared with the record or performance of gifted brother or sister.

Children learn both by imitation and identification with a loved or admired person or group, as they do it by direct experience. So, it is important for parents to realise that what they "do" will have more effect than what they say "should" be done. What I want to say is that if the parents who are critical of the child watching TV, continue to do the same themselves, then definitely they are creating problems for the children for espousing one set of values for the children and a different for themselves. If leisure time of the child has to be planned properly and you don't want him to watch TV for hours together; then teach him that sports, hobbies, friends and reading books are all wonderful alternatives to watching TV.

Because of their superior abilities, gifted children after achieving some sussesses in various fields tend to become proud and look down at their peers and siblings. Such children often ridicule teachers, friends and relatives. This is a reflection of their

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parents behaviour towards teachers, principals and peers in front of children. This should be avoided completely.

In order to achieve his goals, the gifted child works very hard for it. The same may cause stress for him. The responsibility of the parents therefore is to identify the sources of stress and guide the child in making the burden more manageable. Regular physical exercise, recreation, fun and other humorous activities act as stress reduction measures for the gifted child.

Marital conflicts or differences between the parents affect the child's emotional development. Parents should work as one unit and decide about their expectations from the child and set for achieving the goal.

Many a time, the parents identify themselves with the accomplishments of the child, because of which, the parents interfere in all the activities of the child, suggesting and instructing what the child should do. This sort of behaviour on the part of parents may win a prize for the child but surely rot him of his originality, creative thinking spontaenity and independent work.

Parents can also play a vital role in

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providing different services to the gifted children. School authorities and teachers can be contacted by some parents for consultations and bring together all such children. This will increase the competition among them and thereby give a good result.

Lastly, I would like to say that parenting gifted and talented children is such an important job which teachers can help make most effective.

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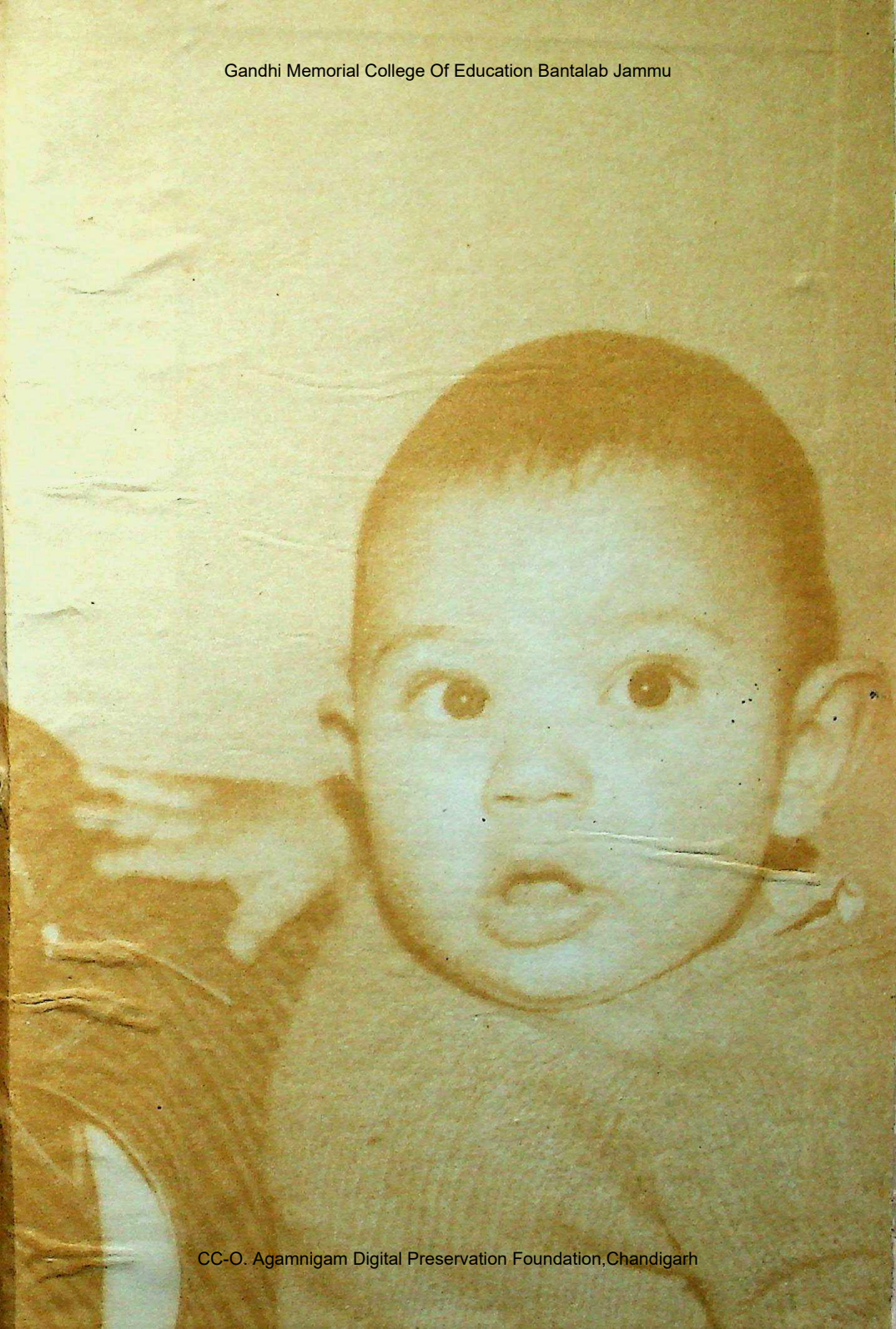

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(Continued from front flap)
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Innovation has been the hallmark of his work in the planning, preparation and presentation of Educational Programmes and programmes for the youth in All India Radio for more than a decade.

His gifts of observation with the magical abilities of a timely trained educator and a communicator have been exhibited by him in the organisation of his work.

Being gifted with traits befitting an artiste of superior stuff, organising various events, producing and directing many a famous plays for rural and urban audience of J & K state both on stage and the electronic media has been display of his inimitable talent. He has the ability to bring the characters alive, right into the heart. His plays are vivid and compassionate. He can make people laugh aloud, while someone inside them feels crying.

He is also the author of **"Intruded Moorings-the Kashmir Perspective."**

The work which follows this work of Ratnakar is -

The oral Communication skill.

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Dear reader,

This book, in your hand, is the outcome of research, survey and analysis undertaken by me for a period of 15 years to bring to surface the usual sort of difficulties, which may mar mental and physical development during the first and second stages of childhood, during puberty, and the period of adolescence.

In this book, I have often stressed on the responsibility of parents and teachers for which I hope that neither the parents nor the teachers will mind because as a father and an educator myself, I know I am just as guilty as anyone. Primarily I believe that none of us is a saint, however pure our intentions may be; secondly I feel that it is in the man's nature to make mistakes.

The mistakes really are not very important because these force our children to adapt themselves to difficulties, which they will inevitably encounter later in the course of their struggle through life. What is important is that our mistakes should not be permanent - and this requires of us that we temper our roles as educators with an unfailing gift for observation and a deep underlying humility. We must always be ready to admit that we have made mistakes - always be ready to change our method if we find that the one we have always used has not produced the desired result. To err is human; to persist in error is damnable!

If much has been attributed to parents and teachers in this book, the same is because that they represent the milieu in which the child develops: they are not individually responsible.

For their vision as educators they need two great principles and the same should never leave them: the first - that throughout life one should always work to free oneself from the unconscious hold which early education has on all of us; the second - that one should aim much more at the long-term formation of children's minds and bodies, than at immediate educative results.

Much goodwill is needed and also a little more knowledge of working of the child's mind.

M.K. Raina Ratnakar

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